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Vengeance of Excalibur
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Reader Service No. 55

STRATEGY PLUS

STRATEGY

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He who plays, wins

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Covering what is in essence a high-tech industry it's easy to get carried away and start slobbering over the new high tech toys – CD ROM being the most obvious medium to increase the slobber factor. *Strategy Plus* is, and always will be, a magazine that is software driven and as such provides scant coverage of the hard stuff. But with 1992 almost upon us, now seems as good a time as any to forgo the usual rant and take a look at what's in store on the various platforms for the new year.

IBM PC

The release of **No Greater Glory** and **Patton Strikes Back** provides an interesting contrast in software philosophy.

In the case of SSI, it has decided not to support VGA in the former game, while Chris Crawford has opted for VGA only in his. As both these games are, by and large, aimed at the same market, the consumer may be forgiven a quizzical glance.

In our own reader poll it transpired that 89% of our readers who own a PC also had VGA graphics, and this was the UK only – supposedly about a year behind the US in such matters. After investing cash in for a VGA upgrade users seek to justify the outlay by purchasing games which support this mode. SSI says that the decision to support CGA and EGA was based on not wanting to lose these markets. In the light of our survey it would be interesting to know what data this decision was based on.

In the case of the particular games mentioned both are excellent, but if the average user (that is, a VGA owner) could only afford one then which is he going to opt for? In fairness to SSI it looks as though they are now about to ring the changes, albeit somewhat belatedly. Next year will see the company upping the ante considerably in the graphics and audio stakes, if news of its **Bismarck** game is accurate.

On other fronts, Microprose says a 386MHz is now the recommended minimum configuration for its games, just as UK manufacturer Amstrad release a 286MHz 'games pack'. And guess what it comes bundled with? That's right, a Microprose game *and*, incredibly, **Links**! ('Make the dinner while the screen redraws, dear.')

CD ROM CD-I CD TV

The question with CD ROM is not so much if, but when? But in the middle of all the froth it's worth recalling that this is a purely a storage system and a new disk drive, the chief benefit of which will be to increase the capacity of programs to output digitized speech and display whiz-bang graphics. The chief hold-up here is the speed, or the 'seek time'.

At the present time there are very few original CD ROM games available. Likewise the CDTV which Commodore is still busily trying to persuade people is not really an Amiga 500 with a CD ROM drive after all, but a vital home accessory (come back all you yuppies). CD-I looks like the more genuine mainstream article but because of this looks unlikely to support games of any depth, at least in the early stages of its development.

Amiga

The secret release of the 1Mb Amiga A500P was greeted with less than overwhelming cries of 'So what?' from many industry figures. Most programmers already use the extra 500k of fast RAM for the A500, so writing programs which require 1Mb of chip RAM (and therefore would not run on a Amiga 500 even with the upgrade) would not only be like throwing the baby out with the bathwater but blowing up the bath itself after you've done so.

As Ian Hetherington of Psygnosis talking to the trade paper *Computer Trade Weekly* put it: 'I don't think anyone can write to 1Mb of chip RAM, if we could write to that it would be mindblowing product, but we can't. I'd be surprised if anyone is writing to 1Mb of chip RAM. Commodore likes the idea of the Amiga being seen as a 1Mb machine but I think it's failed to make the distinction between chip RAM and RAM.'

As if this wasn't enough there are already storm clouds looming over the A500P's compatibility problems with existing software – figures as low as 10% compatibility are being touted, or, if you want to take the pessimistic view, 90% incompatibility.

Look out for features on the CD family very soon. Most of the games available will be covered with the emphasis on looking at the differences between the CD version and their primary format. New games on these formats will be covered as and when they are released.

Cool Yule

To introduce a seasonal note now, this will be the last issue before Christmas that our US readers receive, so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year on behalf of all the staff, and thank you for a most encouraging response (for the most part!) to our foray into your neck of the woods. ❑

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Reader Service No. 75

Utopia

More or less

By John Scott

Yet again I discover that first impressions of a game can be very misleading. Looking at the box and flicking swiftly through the manual, I thought 'Hmmm... yet another **Populous/Powermonger/Megalomania** clone.'

Some people have taken to calling this kind of game a 'god-sim', but our editor detests the expression 'god-sim' so much that he has forbidden its use in any reviews, so I'll not be using the term 'god-sim' at all (*thanks for not mentioning it – Ed*). Not that I would have needed to, anyway, for **Utopia** is not a god-sim.

In **Utopia** the player adopts the persona of commander of a fledgling colony on a distant planet. This colony is initially very basic – solar panels for power, a life support system, some hydroponic chambers to produce food, some very basic radar, but not much else. The commander's first job is to build up the base to a point where it becomes economically self-sufficient (initially it depends on grants from Earth, but these are strictly for a limited period only).

The commander also ensure that the morale of the people is high enough to avoid rebellious elements which could lead anywhere – from petty crime to an assassination attempt! Enroling a large internal security force might also help here.

The screen presentation of **Utopia** is indeed similar to several other games of a type which the editor would prefer me not to mention. There is the same 3D isometric projection of a little corner of the green and pleasant (or grey and dusty) land; the same rows of icons with which to perform various god, er, commander-like functions; it all looks to be more of the same, but it isn't.

After playing it for far, far longer than I intended to, and building numerous colonies, I would have to say that the immediate comparison which springs to mind would be **Sim City**. Even if this 'plan and build' aspect was all there was to **Utopia**, I would still prefer it to **Sim City** because there is a much greater range of options when deciding just what to build. Possibilities open to prospective colony planners include arms laboratories, chemical plants, additional command centres, hospitals, fuel tanks, laser turrets, launch pads, living quarters, missile launchers, power stations, radar buildings, sports stadiums, ship construction yards, tank factories, stores, solar panels, mines – and that's just for starters.

If sufficient laboratories are manned by enough boffins, and if the laboratories are funded generously, they will begin to make astounding discoveries. New improved radar, factories to extract oxygen from space moss, spy-satellites, and so on will improve the colony's defences and improve the lifestyle (and morale) of the citizens. Eventually the whole colony will advance a tech level, and all ships and tanks build will be more efficient.

Similar feel

Building all this marvellous stuff is just like **Sim City**, only better. If there is enough cash in the kitty, and enough free workers, the scaffolding will go up, and depending on the size/complexity of the project and the number of workmen, the building will sooner or later appear and start to function.

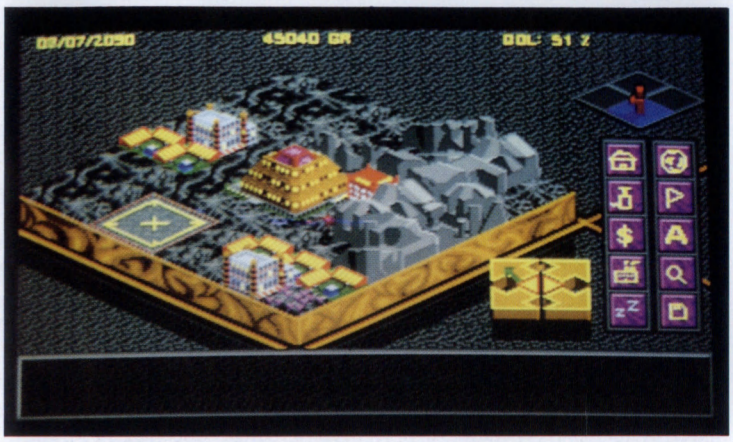
But there isn't much point in having, for example, a shiny new hospital if there are no staff to run it (I'm tempted to make a political statement here, but I forbear...).

None of the buildings is there just for show. Every last one of them is functional. That hospital, for example, will not only lessen fatalities in times of sickness, will not only raise morale, but it will also enable the player to alter the colony's birth rate, avoid overcrowding, or to produce more workers. Other production-type

Designed by
Graeme Ing and Robert Crack

Published by
Gremlin

Systems
Amiga and ST; IBM PC version to follow



buildings such as arms factories or hydroponic labs can produce more than the colony requires.

Then there is the trading aspect to consider. As in real life, it's very much a matter of supply and demand. There's no point in churning out tonnes and tonnes of fuel if no one wants to buy the stuff. It's possible to jump in and handle a month's trading personally – indeed, it may be necessary sometimes – but it's also possible to set it to run automatically.

Breaking down

All that is required is to set, for each commodity, the percentage to be kept for the colony's needs: the trading computer will attempt to sell the rest (the computer breaks down sometimes).

The grant from Earth is vital at first, but eventually requests/orders from the red-tape brigade on Earth can become a real pain. Knowing nothing of the exigencies of off-world life, they are likely to demand a dozen or so of the best scientists just as they are on the point of making a major technological breakthrough. Failure to comply carries a hefty fine.

There are all sorts of other problems such as viruses and eclipses (which make a complete nonsense of all the colony's lovingly arranged solar panels). But worst of all there is... the enemy!

The enemy lives out there somewhere, setting up a colony of its own. Who knows what kind of creatures they may be, how technologically advanced, how warlike? Well, for the sake of the colony the commander had better find out, and make sure that he has enough cash in hand to finance a spy network.

You get what you pay for and this can mean anything from none at all to low level surveillance, or the use of special operatives.

Spies provide all sorts of info - ranging from the physical appearance and customs of the baddies to really useful stuff such as the fact that an invasion force has just set out and whether they will attack from the air, by land, or both.

Laser turrets, missiles, and tanks are useful defensive weapons. There are a number of different types of spaceship which can join the tanks and go to (try to) trash the alien colony. An overhead view of the area can be accessed to check for the approach of aliens (should they enter the area covered by radar, or if the colony has invented a spy satellite).

This same map can be used to pinpoint a number of other important features, such as where to dig for ore or fuel. When (if) the enemy are defeated, the commander can settle down to the serious business of making his people very happy.

You see, the overall object of the game is not just to build a pretty colony, or to make lots of money trading. The object is not even to wipe out the enemy – all these things are but means to an end. The commander's aim is to raise the morale of his people to 80–90% and keep it there. He will then be awarded an extreme cleverness medal by Earth, before moving on to the next scenario, and doing it all over again.

I almost forgot to mention that he doesn't have to do it all alone. He has a team of experts to advise him. This committee is composed of his military supreme commander, financial consultant, head of research, colony administrator, and (wait for it) senior psychiatrist. Each of them will be there with statistics by the armful and words of encouragement or warning.

Trick cyclist

The manual is clear and well presented, and the box contains a separate booklet tutorial. The only grouse I have is that twice so far the game has crashed on me half-way through a session – and I hadn't saved the game.

Utopia is a wonderful game. It's easy to get into, it's a lot of fun, but there's a lot of depth and complexity there too – so many elements are interrelated.

The graphics and sound, especially during the combat sequences, are excellent. There is even a choice of several musical them ranging from Pachelbel's Canon to sci-fi sounds. If you don't enjoy **Utopia**, I think a visit to the senior psychiatrist might be in order. ❑

Romance of the Three Kingdoms II

Chinese takeaway

By Brian Walker

Designed by
'Kou Shibasawa'

Published by
Koei Corporation

Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
EGA

Supports
Adlib sound board; keyboard

Players
1–12

This exotically named game is the latest in the series of Koei's historical simulation based on ancient oriental history, following on from **Nobunaga's Ambition**, **Genghis Khan**, **Bandit Kings of Ancient China** and, of course, it's own prequel.

Anyone who has played the first game will be keen to know the changes that this new release incorporates, so without further ado they are: more scenarios (six as opposed to five); up to 12 human players may now participate; more generals and more memory.

Koei has also made the momentous decision to move up from four colour EGA to eight colour EGA – a small step for mankind, but a great leap for Koei. Adlib sound is also supported for the first time in a Koei game.

Digital shock

The digitized opening theme is indeed attractive, but the subsequent cacophony is something of a shock to the nervous system – it's like walking into a favourite Chinese restaurant and discovering that the piped music has been replaced by MC Hammer. Although there are also some other new features, the basic system remains unchanged.

General mayhem

The game opens in 2nd century China with the country in a state of flux. The ruling Later Han Dynasty is near to collapse and, as usual, there is no shortage of power mad warlords waiting to step into the breach. The player's task is to take on the role of one said power mad warlord and attempt to 'unify' the country by controlling all 41 provinces.

To appease anyone who does not feel the need to 'act out' such a role with a predefined leader, Koei have provided a sort of do-it-yourself power mad warlord kit whereby the player himself can name and define the attributes of his alter ego.

There is also an option to play the game in either historical mode or fictional mode. In the former the warlords will pass away at the same time as they did historically, unless they die with their boots on beforehand. They will also be blessed with the same historical enemies.

The six scenarios included span the period AD 189 to AD 220. Unusually the victory conditions are the same for each. What differs is the sphere of influence and the warlords available (and thus the starting province).

A turn consists of choosing a command from a menu of 19. Within these commands there are subsidiary ones. Each general under the warlord's control may be given one command a turn. The commands available cleverly reflect the period: flood control, plagues of locusts, and diplomacy are just some of the many elements factored into the whole. The keyboard interface is user friendly and delivers a firm riposte to those who demand a mouse with everything. A single keystroke is all that is necessary to issue a command.

Combat occurs when an occupied territory is invaded. The screen then changes to tactical combat mode with a hex grid layout. The combat sequences are the best part of what is a rather dry game. Success depends largely on strength of numbers and a good level of training (this can be achieved via a series of commands). When a territory is conquered the player may delegate control to an underling (the computer). Even though computer administrators tend towards the psychopathic this is generally advisable when a lot of provinces need looking after.

Like all the games in the Koei series, the strategy in **Romance of Three Kingdoms II** is as inscrutable as it is unfathomable. This is a tough game, make no mistake. Perhaps familiarity is breeding contempt, but for this writer the sense of *deja vu* overwhelmed any feeling of enjoyment. This is the sixth game from Koei to use what is basically the same system, and enough is enough.

When **Nobunaga's Ambition** was first released in 1981 the game was rightly hailed a classic, but if a week in politics is considered a long time then what must nine years in the software business be? And yet this latest release looks no different from its illustrious predecessor: it has the same two screens and the same wobbly resolution.

On the plus side the documentation is superb: a perfect bound 118-page manual that provides detailed histories of the period and the participants therein. Also included is a useful summary card of all the commands.

Heavyweight

Anyone looking for a heavyweight strategy game yet has not encountered a Koei product before will probably not be too disappointed with this one.

For those Koei kids like myself who are now seeking something more innovative, then Koei's upcoming role-playing strategy game, the aptly named **Uncharted Waters**, may prove to be more to their liking. ❑

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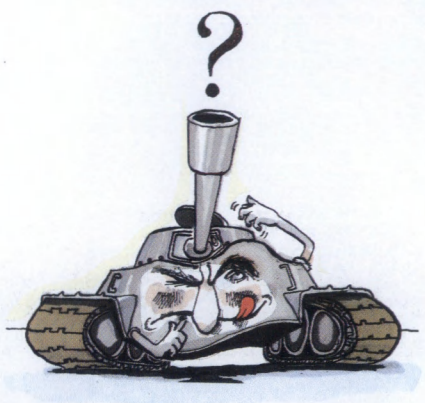
THE THINK TANK



Steven Wartofsky helps out with Mindcraft's Rules of Engagement

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Published by
Mindcraft

UK distributor
Electronic Arts

Systems
IBM PC, Amiga, ST

PC graphics
VGA, EGA, CGA

Supports
Mouse; Roland, Adlib and Sound Blaster sound boards

Let's start off with something a little unusual. What seems like perhaps the least-important, least-used system in this game can in fact be quite crucial during play. I refer to the receive and transmit as well as the interference meters on either side of the vidcomm display.

Why are these important? Receive and transmit provides the player with a quick sense of how far into or potentially out of communications the commander might be with other ships in a few moments. Interference reminds the player of the importance of maintaining strategic integrity when near stars. Check these regularly when in communications with other ships.

Panel beating

Rules of Engagement is an exceedingly deceptive game design. First contact is likely to leave the player's eyes glazed over, as the sheer number of panels, panels behind panels, panels linked to panels, and panels called up from panels is astounding. I remember vividly the attempt someone made to demonstrate **Rules of Engagement** to me during last June's Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago; hard as I tried to follow, I felt like I was being given a lesson in advanced quantum mechanics in 10 minutes flat.

What's deceptive about the above is that, after becoming familiar with the relations between different panels, and with the way information is grouped on screen, instead of being perplexed the player will end up marvelling at how sincerely logical **Rules of Engagement** proves to be. Like **Megafortress** (of all things), this design is very stations-oriented, and playing the game well involves an understanding of which stations are likely to prove most crucial at certain points in the game.

Talking point

Communications is always a must. No matter how crazy things are getting at other stations, checking in regularly here is crucial. It's all too easy to slip into using the command ship as the primary attack weapon, when in fact for most of the more complex scenarios the player's best bet is to hold back and focus on command control of the other ships in a fleet.

Staying focused on communications, with quick visits to navigation and less frequently to tactical, keeps the player in the right frame of mind for success.

Focus on the tactical station only when it's clear that either the fleet's other ships have completed most of the designated task, or they've all failed miserably to come to terms with an obstacle that only the command ship's capabilities and the commander's know-how can deal with.

That said, the least clever blunders likely to be made have to do with – strike foreheads in unison here – remembering what timescale the game has been set at.

One too many times I have been trembling with awe at the incredible swiftness and agility of the computer opponent's manoeuvres, only to discover that such lightning-bug ballets could be more leisurely turtle pas-de-deuxs if only the time were set to something less than 32x greater than normal.

If the player is going to pay good attention to command control, having a reasonable combination of officers underfoot is of course necessary for one's pleasure.

Spend some time with the captain builder, and design as appealing and diverse a collection of sycophants as imagination will muster prior to plunging into the wilds of alien country. Ten different traits can be fiddled with for each captain, more than is available in many so-called role-playing games, so plenty of variety in performance is possible.

And, as the review in issue 12 makes clear, these folks are important to the fleet's success. Unlike some systems, more than one or two traits (like strength and agility) are applicable to the way the computer captains will handle encounters with the unknown.

So, too, despite the fact that the default ships are quite serviceable, great amounts of fun can be had working with the ship builder. This is the most radically delimited element of the design system, perhaps for mysterious reasons beknown only to the designer himself, but it's still worth attention.

Finally, enemy races can be handled much like the captains, because they also have 10 traits. For races as well as for captains, thinking out and writing up a good, lively description of individual strengths and weaknesses brings these folks alive; don't dismiss the importance of what might otherwise seem like window dressing.

The clue in all this is that you should spend some time designing missions, perhaps even before plunging deep into the scenarios provided with the game. Scandalous. The idea here is not that all the work of Haywood Nichols and the other scenario designers should be ignored or dismissed, far from it. Merely that engaging in some tentative, initial work with the mission builder system will provide a much richer background from which to approach actual game play.

Eat the rich

Rules of Engagement is a special kind of strategy game, in the same category as the best of the PBM and board strategy designs. It is essentially a supplement to the richness of the player's imagination, and the wide variety of information systems and options can easily provide openings into a universe of one's own.

Like PBM and boardgaming, there's less reliance on the system to frazzle, dash, zang and glim the player into hypnotic reverence of others' arts; instead, **Rules of Engagement** plays smoothly and deeply, transparently enough to give the mind a chance to roam. And that's quite refreshing, if you have any mind left. ❑

UMS II™-NATIONS AT WAR • PLANET EDITOR

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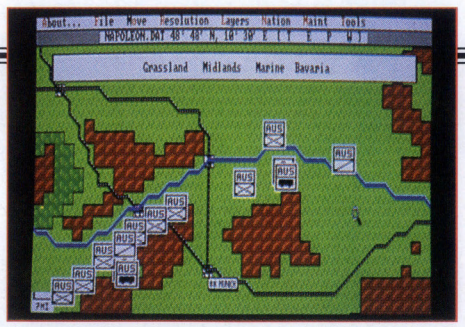

IBM screens shown. Actual screens may vary.

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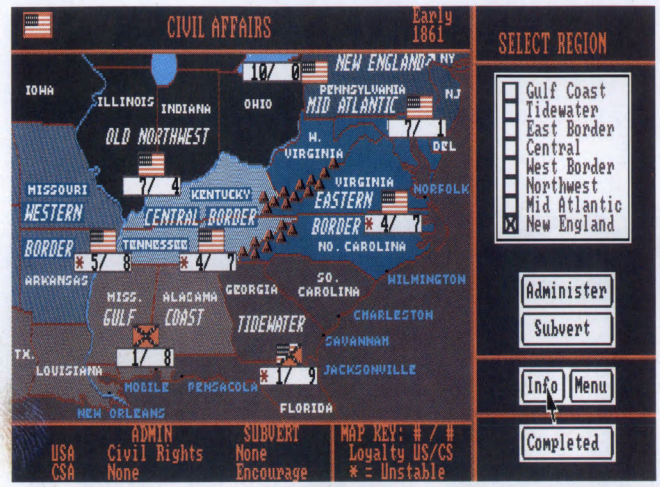
For IBM-PC/Tandy/compatibles, Amiga and Macintosh personal computers. For the latest information on release dates and availabilities, call MicroProse Customer Service at 301-771-1151, 9 am to 5 pm EST, weekdays. *UMS II: Nations At War* is required in order to use Planet Editor worlds in actual battles. ©1991 MicroPlay Software.

Reader Service No. 75

No Greater Glory

Delving into Dixie

By Brian Walker



Designed by
Ed Bever

Published by
SSI

UK distributor
US Gold

Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
CGA, EGA

Supports
Mouse, keyboard

Notes
Package comes with the novel The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane. It is not known whether this will be included in the UK edition. Hard disk is mandatory

Ed Bever, the designer of this game, is a veteran programmer from the days of Microprose's Command Decision series and is generally regarded as someone incapable of designing a dud.

His last game, **Revolution '76**, focused on the War of Independence. The reaction to it was somewhat mixed: on one hand it was recognized as being innovative in a modest sort of way, but on the down side its linear nature limited the replay value. All this is pertinent because **No Greater Glory**, while using a souped up version of the same system, eliminates much of this problem.

The year is 1861 with the disunited states of America in ferment over the slave issue. The human catastrophe that was the American Civil War is about to commence. After setting the game parameters (historical or random) the player may opt to take on the role of either Jefferson Davis or Abraham Lincoln.

No matter which leader is chosen the first task is to appoint a cabinet. Candidates are rated according to loyalty, administrative ability, political faction, and regional alliances. The latter is particularly important as regions get peeved (with a consequent drop in loyalty if they feel they are not adequately represented in the cabinet).

A game turn represents four months and is broken down into four phases, each with their own sub phases. It should be emphasized at this point that **No Greater Glory** is essentially a political game rather than a conventional wargame. The player has no hands-on control over any of the battles. The first phase in a turn is civil affairs, where the policies of regions controlled must be set, or in the event of enemy territories, subversion instigated.

In the slavery phase the player must decide what policy to pursue. In the case of the Union this phase becomes redundant once a policy of complete emancipation has been embarked on. I'd recommend doing this as soon as possible – for one thing it enables blacks to be recruited.

During the finance phase the budget must be set. The primary actions here are setting the tax rate and the level of interest to be paid on government bonds. If spending (for the war effort) outstrips income an inflation warning will occur. It is possible, however, to carry on spending; the government simply prints more money. The down side is that as inflation goes up, popularity meets it on the way down.

Assets are bought in the mobilization phase. In the strategic movement phase units may be moved to friendly territories – it's generally a good idea to reinforce border towns and localities suffering from a high degree of unrest.

Movement can be by rail, riverboat, or naval vessels depending on the capacity available. In this phase supply is analyzed. Units out of supply will loot which will have a reductive effect on the productivity level of the area being besieged.

Whenever an army moves a general must be assigned to it. All generals are rated according to prestige, and to avoid an outbreak of general whingeing make sure they are appointed in order of prestige (starting with 1).

In the campaign phase units may be moved into enemy held territory wherein combat will occur. Combat is resolved though a combination of the general's prestige level, the orders to hand, and of course, he with the mostest...

The last phase is the diplomacy phase where attempts are made by both sides to persuade England and France to join in the fun. Coercion, bribery, and plain old threats are some of the options available. At the end of each turn (every quarter) a detailed report is provided depicting progress, or lack of it, in all areas.

Every four or six years (depending on the side) elections take place, the loss of which will result in defeat for one side. Defeat may also be attained militarily and diplomatically.

Home in the saddle

For such a complex subject **No Greater Glory** is remarkable easy to play. Within minutes of booting up the player can be blundering around making ludicrous cabinet appointments and alienating the French. The excellent 110-page perfect bound book that accompanies the game is more than just a player aid.

In addition to game instructions there is a comprehensive section on strategy, a history of the war, and a short piece on the Northern economy by Ed Bever himself.

Quibbles? The low-resolution EGA graphics and the lack of a post-game analysis for the loser. President Walker, masquerading as Abraham Lincoln, fell foul of the treacherous French and suffered a wholly unjustified defeat. This embarrassment was compounded by the lack of any performance analysis – the DOS prompt can look exceptionally unsympathetic in such circumstances. Apparently a detailed report is one of the spoils of victory.

In summary this game can be unhesitatingly recommended to war and strategy gamers alike. Depth is a much abused term in reference to computer games, but **No Greater Glory** has it to spare and is a credit to all concerned.

No greater glory indeed... ❑

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RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

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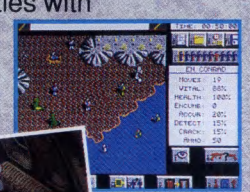

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Reader Service No. 10

MINDCRAFT

Rules of Engagement is a product of Omnitrend Software, Inc., published by Mindcraft Software, Inc.
Actual photos from the IBM/VGA version. Other versions may vary.

OMNITREND SOFTWARE

Conquest

Risk factor

By Gary L Burns

Published by
David Burns
(Shareware)

Designed by
David Burns

Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
256-colour VGA, EGA

Supports
Internal speaker, mouse

Notes
The game may be downloaded from the Compuserve Gamers' Forum or obtained directly from: David Burns, PO Box 693, Bedford, MA 01730, USA. Frequent upgrades are posted on Compuserve. Burns keeps a list of registered users and informs them of upgrades from time to time. He may be contacted on Compuserve 70244,3650. The latest version of the game costs $20 registration fee plus $1 for shipping outside North America

One of the most challenging, flexible, and user-friendly strategy games to come down the pike in some time is **Conquest**, a design whose origins are obviously based on the classic board game **Risk**. The designer (no relation!) has carried that concept a long way forward.

Up to eight players (any or all of whom may be computer-controlled) vie for control of a map that may include up to 200 territories on 30 continents. The mechanics of the game resemble those of **Risk.** All the information that's necessary is available in the form of on-line instructions and help. Play is accomplished with a mouse-driven, point and click interface that makes heavy use of pop-up menus.

Once a game map has been selected and starting armies have been placed, play proceeds in a sequence of turns that involve placement of new armies, attacks, and free moves. As players gain new territories and continents, they are awarded new armies to be placed on following turns.

Combat is between armies in adjacent territories and once an enemy has been cleared from a territory, friendly forces may move in. Armies advance from territory to territory without regard to terrain.

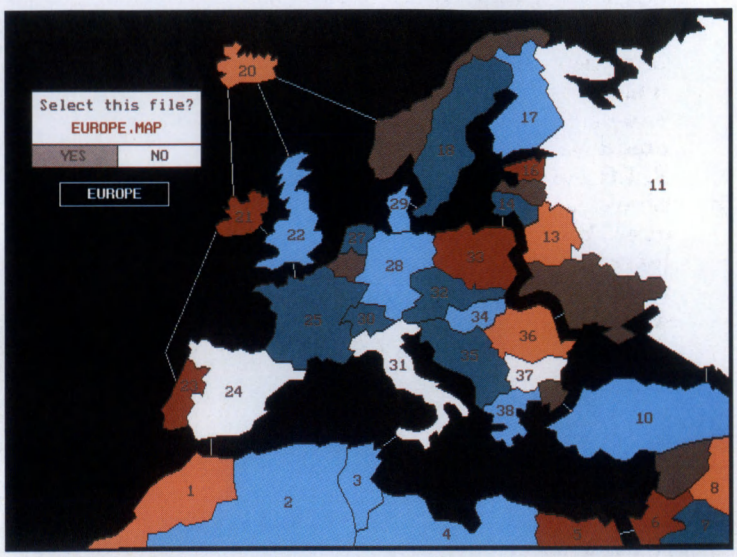
The entire map and disposition of forces are visible to players at all times, unless the diabolically tough hide option is chosen. This option limits knowledge of enemy forces to those in adjacent territories.

Options brings me to the strongest aspect of the game: its flexibility. **Conquest** can be configured to suit the taste of just about anyone, because virtually every feature in the game is adjustable.

Drawing the line

Each computer player, for example, may be set to adopt an aggressive, defensive, balanced or random style. Further, the computer players may be set to employ Blitzkrieg tactics, moving around strongholds and hitting weak points, or Maginot Line tactics, going after strong points to wear them down and then sitting back in heavily defended positions.

Each computer player's intelligence level may be set on a scale from one to 10. The higher the number, the stronger the computer player. And the upper-level players are good.



The default victory condition is to conquer the entire map, but this may be adjusted to allow victory for conquering a given percentage of the map, or for controlling the most territories after so many rounds, or for owning the most armies after so many rounds.

When deciding the outcome of a battle, the computer makes an internal roll of the die, with the loser having an army removed from his force. The attacker then elects whether to continue the fight or break off. Attack scoring may be set to give even chances during each roll to both the attacker and the defender, or weighted chances in favour of the combatant with the most armies present. Other options include two types of cyclic attack chances, wherein player luck varies according to constant cycles of long or short duration. Another option allows the attacker to roll three dice against two for the defender.

Bonus armies are awarded to a player when he eliminates one of his rivals. This number may be fixed at five or 10, or set to start at five and escalate by five each time a player is vanquished. Players may choose not to use this option at all. Additional bonus armies are awarded when a player controls an entire continent or continents.

Players may make one or more free moves at the end of their turns to reinforce positions. This option can be turned off.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the game is that it is shareware. The designer, David Burns, is an electrical engineering graduate of the United States Air Force Academy who is currently a captain in the US Air Force. In his day job he supervises contractors developing computer systems used to plan air combat missions.

Unregistered users of **Conquest** can play on only a single, abstract playing map. Once the game is registered with the author, scores of other maps are available, including maps of the world, Europe, North America, Africa, and a series of huge hexagon-filled abstract designs.

If you don't mind having to send off for or downloading the game, then **Conquest** is highly recommended. ❑

• IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES, C.G.A., E.G.A., V.G.A., TANDY 16 COLOR AND AD LIB CARD • AMIGA 500,

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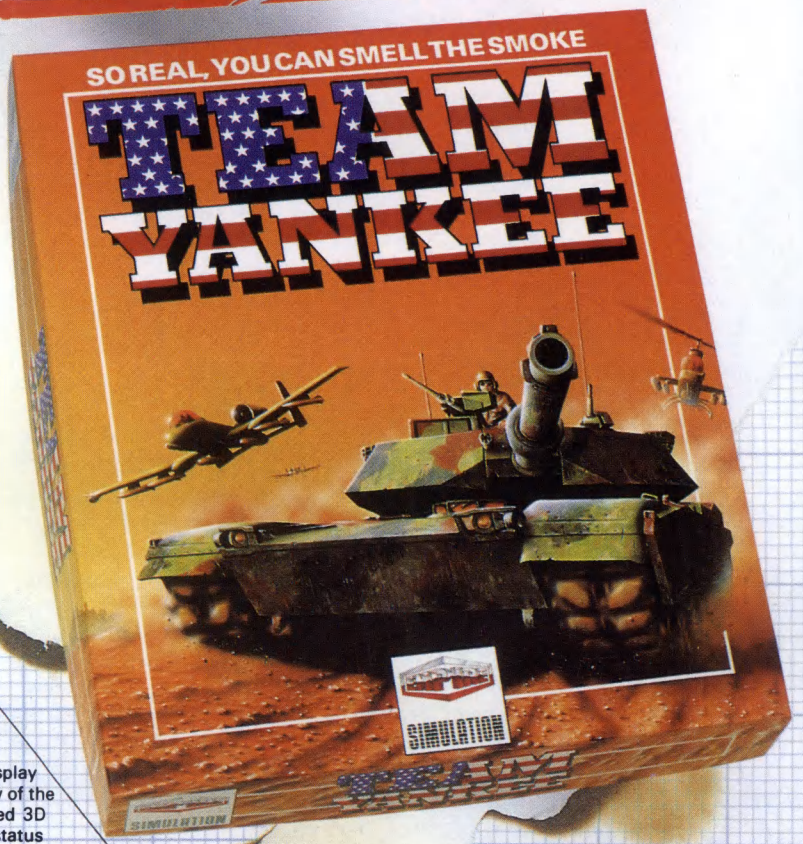
"ROMEO 25 - THIS IS MIKE 77 - SPOT REPORT - 5 T72 TANKS MOVING WEST - GRID 190852 - CONTINUING OVER"

Capt. Sean Bannon snapped his head to the left. There was only one place where the Russians could be, and that was on the hill 2200 metres away. All the training, planning and preparations were over. Team Yankee was about to learn if the team's seventy nine men and twenty five million dollars worth of equipment could do what they were supposed to do.



Team Yankee is designed to test your leadership and tactical skills to the limit. You can display in either **"quadrant mode"** where all four platoons may be controlled at once

or

Full-screen Mode where the display homes in on just one platoon.

You have the flexibility to display either an overhead map view of the surrounding area, a simulated 3D view of the battlefield, or a status screen showing the performance of all vehicles in a platoon. Irrespective of which screen mode you choose during battle, there is a constant column of information to the right of the screen.

To the right of the compasses are five icons which represent the various types of **weaponry** available to the unit.

MACHINE GUN - which is always available to the player and has an 'infinite' number of rounds.

SMOKE - a smoke grenade which allows enemy vision to be obscured.

HEAT - a high explosive anti-tank round

SABOT - an armor-piercing tungsten shell

TOW - a high-range anti-tank missile

The major capability on the quadrant map screen is to alter the movement and formation of any platoon. The whole of the map may be viewed at once, or you may zoom into any portion of the battlefield using the icons to the right of the map.

Team Yankee is the definitive action simulation of modern tank warfare. Watch scenarios unfold on 3D battlefields with high definition graphics and keep track of the four tank platoons you control using the unique 4 quadrant display. Defend Hill 214 from Yuri Potecknov's crack tank platoons, attack Objective Link through sniper fire from forests, protect the Langen Gap from an entire Soviet tank battalion at night!

Engine smoke This will prove very useful in confusing your enemy if you find yourself in a tight corner.

Rotation icon and compass display.

Infra red (or thermal) **imaging** This feature is very useful for identifying vehicles camouflaged on the edge of forests. Contary to popular belief the thermal image is green and not red.

Zoom. When this icon is accessed the central portion of the screen is magnified by a factor of 10.

Laser range finder. The range finder will lock on to a reflective target if the firing cursor is placed directly over the object.

Wide formation icon. This increases the spacing between vehicles in your platoon to 100 metres.

Narrow formation icon. This reduces the inter-vehicle spacing in your platoon to 50 metres.

Vee. a vee formation.

Echelon left - places your vehicles on a right to left diagonal relative to your direction.

Wedge - places your vehicles in a wedge formation.

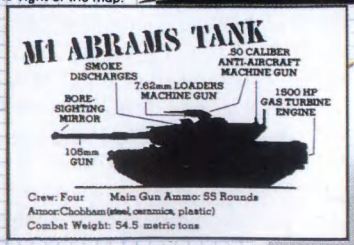
In line - places your vehicles in a line abreast relative to your direction.

Echelon right - places your vehicles on a left to right diagonal relative to your direction.

Column - places your vehicles in a line ahead relative to your direction.

Scroll icon: The four arrows underneath the ETA display allow you to scroll your map in any of the four directions.

Dead Stop icon. This red icon, causes your platoon to come to a dead halt when clicked.



Five major scenarios based on the battles featured in the New York Times No. 1 best seller Team Yankee.

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Team Yankee, The Novel was written by Harold Coyle. Made in the U.K.

EMPIRE SIMULATION

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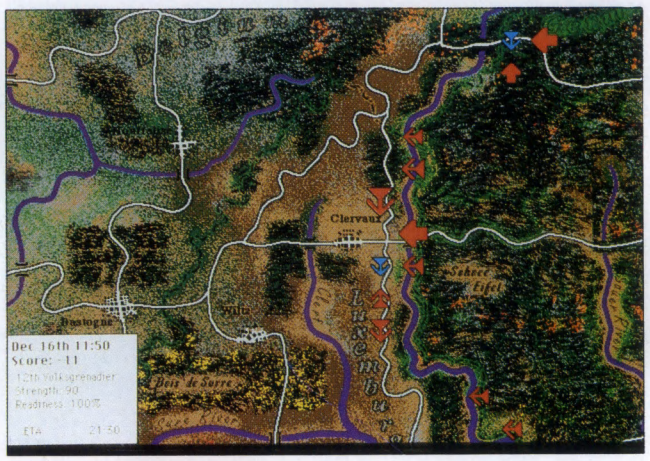
Reader Service No. 98

Patton Strikes Back

Bulging at the seams

By Peter Szymonik

Chris Crawford has been designing computer games and simulations almost as long as there have been personal computers. **Patton Strikes Back** is Crawford's latest game. It is billed as the 'wargame for non-wargamers'. Ideally then, this game should appeal to the average computer gamer who is looking for a good strategy game, yet still provide enough of a challenge to veteran wargamers.



Designed by
Chris Crawford

Published by
Brøderbund

UK distributor
To be announced

Systems
Mac and IBM PC

PC graphics
VGA only

Supports
Adlib sound board, digitized speech through a Sound Blaster; mouse

Notes
PC users need a VGA card and a mouse

The Battle of the Bulge is not the easiest battle to simulate. An endless number of random elements affected the course of the battle and it could have easily gone the other way. The terrain on which the battle was fought was varied, the weather was unpredictable, logistics was a nightmare for both sides, and chaos and confusion reigned over the battlefield.

What makes this battle especially appealing to game designers is the fact that both sides play the role of attacker and defender while simultaneously fighting against time. The German player must strike hard and fast before the Patton arrives with his Third Army and the Allied player must shore up his defences and play for time until Allied air power can take its toll on the German armour.

The map in **Patton Strikes Back** is beautiful. The entire battlefield is depicted in a full colour terrain map that could have been lifted right out of the pages of *National Geographic*. There are no confusing hexes in this game; movement is calculated transparently by the computer.

The military unit markers are a radical departure from the standard armour, mechanized, and infantry symbols. Rather than displaying a unit's composition, in **Patton Strikes Back** the units display their current orders through the use of intuitive symbols.

At a glance it's possible to tell exactly what every unit on the front line is doing. Movement is shown my directional arrows, defensive positions look like small fortified positions facing a certain direction, attacking units have big bold arrows showing the direction of their attack, and shattered units are shown as a large X.

This innovation has a tremendous effect on game play. Instead of checking every unit each turn to make sure it's following orders, a quick glance instantly determines the unit's current disposition. In a similar fashion, it's also possible quickly to determine supply lines and unsupplied units, overall unit strength, zones of control, and landmarks quickly and easily by using the pull-down menus.

Fast pace

These menus are used constantly throughout the game because the game runs in real time. This makes for a fast-paced game, but one that doesn't get out of hand.

Time can be halted simply by selecting any unit on the screen. Giving orders is as simple as pointing to a unit and clicking on it. The unit blinks and a selection is made from the pull-down menu (attack, defend or move).

Move orders are given by dragging the mouse along a path while holding down the mouse button. There are no obscure movement points to worry about – the computer automatically works out the unit's estimated time of arrival at the destination point in a small window that appears in the lower left-hand corner (this window also serves to identify the unit).

Orders can be given once for the entire front, then all the player has to do is sit back and watch the action, intervening only when changes need to be made to the strategy (which is quite often!).

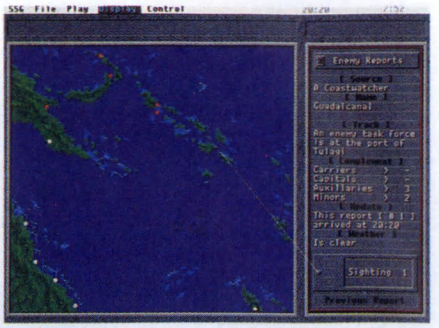
The mechanics are completely transparent to the player – there is nothing to calculate and no complex rules to worry about. The computer does all the work so the player can concentrate on strategy instead of bookkeeping.

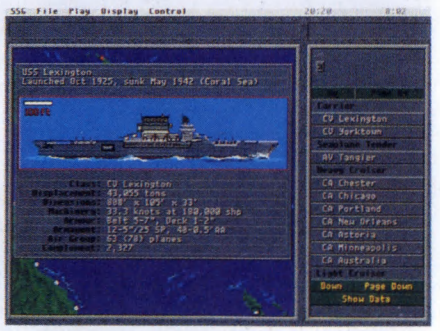
History lesson

Game aside, **Patton Strikes Back** is also an educational experience. Play is regularly interrupted while a short one-page historical 'anecdote' appears on the screen. These anecdotes cover everything from weapons used in the battle to life as a soldier in Patton's army. This makes the whole game feel that much more realistic and personal. It's one thing to rejoice after retaking a captured town, but it's quite another when that event is followed with a historical anecdote detailing the misery of civilian life during wartime. These 52 anecdotes cover everything from German paratroopers to MacAuliffe's famous 'Nuts!' comment, and if you tire of them after a while, they can be turned off.

One of the most impressive features of **Patton Strikes Back** is what may be properly defined as the use of limited multimedia. After a significant battle, a short black-and-white movie is played explaining the outcome accompanied by a short soundtrack. This little experiment in computer game design is sure to draw the attention of other game manufacturers and game players alike.

As a veteran board wargamer of 15 years plus, I found **Patton Strikes Back** to be not only challenging, but also historically accurate. In designing a game for non-wargamers, Chris Crawford may have in fact designed a game that gives us a glimpse at computer games of the future. ❑





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5 1/4" or 3 1/2 " $59.95

Design notes on Civilization, by Bruce Shelley

THE FRUITS OF LABOUR

Civilization is the third game that I have had the privilege of working on with Sid Meier. **Civilization** came into existence while we were finishing **Railroad Tycoon** and before we went on to complete **Covert Action.**

For about a month between products we worked on a number of ideas. Sid has the remarkable ability to write quick code. After adding a little artwork and borrowing parts of previous games, we can get a working concept on-screen in only a few days. Within a week or two of finishing **Railroad Tycoon** we had a playable version of what would become **Civilization**.

Contrary to what might be an obvious conclusion to draw, our game had nothing to do with the boardgame of the same name. While Sid was working on his first prototype, I was working on something else. To my knowledge, Sid was not even aware at the time that the boardgame existed. When he showed me what he had developed and I got involved, some influence may have crept in because I knew the boardgame very well.

Creative approach

From our conversations, I knew that Sid was searching for a topic that could embrace the new game concepts that had worked so well in **Railroad Tycoon** and in some of the other 'creator' type games that had appeared. The ideal topic could pose the player as the hero and builder; it would require continuous decision-making and hands-on control; and the game situation would evolve and be dynamic.

The history of civilization fitted the requirements in every way and was quickly recognized as a strong game concept. When we suspended work to complete **Covert Action**, we knew that we already had the groundwork laid for a game the following year.

Correcting a mistake that I made with **Railroad Tycoon**, I saved one complete version of **Civilization** each month as we worked on it. The oldest that I have is dated 9th May 1990, not long after the completion of **Railroad Tycoon**. Loading it and looking at it is an interesting experience. First, I notice that the pre-game customized world, Earth, and level of difficulty options are missing. The graphics are sparse and all in EGA.

Beginning a new game with this old version, I start with a city already built. There is no menu bar with its reports, options, civilopedia and so on. The city display is fairly empty of stuff, but most of the main parts are organized as they are now. Instead of figures representing the population, we have happy and sad faces.

In the original version I see that barbarians were much tougher, as they quickly destroyed my first two cities. Rather than end the game, I find that I started over elsewhere on the map. In quick succession, I start over, I am destroyed, start over again, get a reasonable start and build a second city. A revolt occurs some distance away and a Persian city and four military units join my civilization. Whew!

Trial and error

Looking back now on this 17-month-old version, I can see the fruits of the trial and error design process. As with previous games, our routine was a day of testing, a late afternoon review and discussion, recoding by Sid, and a fresh start the next morning. Sid produced a new version nearly every day. Ideas came and went, and gradually the design took shape. The **Civilization** about to be published is much more polished in graphics, interface, detail, decision-making, and challenge than the archival version from May 1990.

But it is striking that so many elements of the earliest saved work are still prominent. The map is the same size, units are still moved individually, the map and city displays are improved but recognizable, over half of the advances on the original list are retained, and most of the unit and city improvement types are still present.

As I write, it is the middle of October and the team is working hard. Sid is adjusting algorithms, fixing bugs, and putting in music and art as they are finished; the manual has gone to the printer and I have started writing the technical supplement; I'm also writing the remainder of the blurbs for the civilopedia and doing some testing; six artists, led by our art director, Michael Haire, are wrapping up the art package; Jeff Briggs is writing the last music compositions; and quality control is rigorously testing the game and helping to isolate bugs.

In addition, there are about 10 people on our staff who are playing this game on their own time, including programmers, artists, and designers. In nearly four years with Microprose, I have never seen this much interest among the staff for a new product. Several people have commented that this is Sid's best game ever, and despite a soft spot in my heart for **Railroad Tycoon**, I'm inclined to agree.

Civilization was a great project to work on. It was so much fun and so absorbing that is was quite easy to suddenly lose several hours playing. All of us at Microprose in the UK and USA are proud of **Civilization** and hope you will agree that it is an extraordinary game. ❑

Release details
Civilization will be published by Microprose. IBM PC version expected in early December

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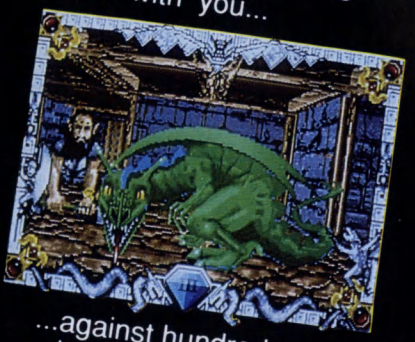
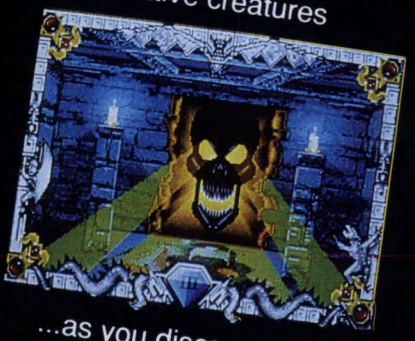


...against hundreds of imaginative creatures



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Reader Service No. 5

SHIP AHOY!

SSG's Carriers at War comes home, by Brian Walker

One of the most venerable strategy games for the C64 was undoubtedly SSG's **Carriers at War**. Now, in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbour it is back, and in glorious 256-colour VGA. To describe it as a revamp, though, would be misleading. What we have here is a brand new game altogether.

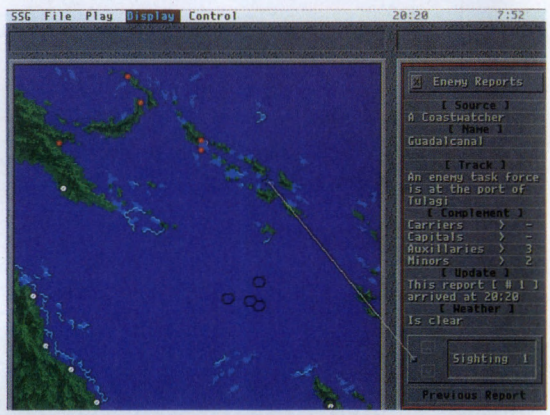
SSG is renowned for the quality of its artificial intelligence and **Carriers at War** looks set to further the company's reputation in this respect. Included among the generals the player may choose from are; MacArthur, Halsey, Yamamoto, as well as a dozen more.

Crucial brew

The scenarios focus on the six most crucial carrier battles from the Second World War: Pearl Harbour, Midway, Eastern Solomons, Santa Cruz, Philippine Sea, and The Great Marianas Turkey Shoot.

SSG claims that **Carriers at War** will feature complete accuracy of military forces on both sides, hundreds of individually modelled ships and aircraft, limited intelligence to simulate the confusion and uncertainty of battle, plus a special tactical battle system for surface combat resolution. Adlib sound will be supported.

The company's Battlefront series looks a trifle redundant in the light of inevitable changes in technology. **Carriers at War** sees SSG moving confidently into the 1990s and looking set to augment the commercial success of **Warlords**. **Carriers at War** should be available for the PC now. ❑



Censor humour

All of us here at Origin have been following the debate about our voluntary MP-13 rating for **Ultima VII**. Both you and your readers make some interesting points, but we feel we need to clear up some misconceptions.

First, the rating has nothing to do with scantily clad women. Regular **Ultima** players know that Britannia can sometimes be a violent place. The rating is our way of letting players and parents know that some of the scenes might be unsettling. Better communication with the consumer isn't our idea of censorship in any form.

As a charter member of the Software Publishers Association, Origin is confident that software manufacturers are in the best position to come up with some industry standards for self-regulation, perhaps even an entire ratings structure. If we wait until some government agency decides to step in and set those standards for us, that's when the beast of censorship will truly rear its ugly head.

Galen Svanas
Media relations manager
Origin Systems
Austin, Texas, USA

Thanks for clarification, though all the harpies are going to be disappointed.

Disgusted of Banstead

I am becoming increasingly concerned about where *Strategy Plus* is going. It seems that every two or three months there is a change of direction. Currently we seem to be in mid Atlantic! While I want to be kept abreast of developments across the pond, I do not want a US-oriented magazine. If I did want one, I would take out a subscription.

Presumably as a sop to the American audience we have another feature on baseball to follow last month's American football feature. If this suggests that I am not a sports sim fan, this is not the case; I'm just not interested in baseball.

Then there are the American adverts with their cavalier disclaimer that compatibility is the buyer's problem. I have had enough compatibility problems with Impressions software for my Amiga 1500!

Another irritation is the total neglect of boardgames. Now I know there aren't too many good ones on the market these days, but Alan Moon used to keep us informed of happenings 'over there' and Sniper used to fill us in on the UK scene.

The current issue in particular lacks balance; there are no fewer than seven features or reviews of air sims! And as for the paper that the magazine is printed on, well I can only say it is very user unfriendly.

TD Burge
Banstead
Surrey SM7 1JQ, UK

*Yep, **Strategy Plus** is anchored in the mid Atlantic just west of the Azores. Look out for us next year off the coast of Mozambique. Our aim is to bring you coverage of the best software available no matter where it comes from. Try to be a little less parochial in your outlook.*

Short of it leaping out and biting you, it's hard to see how paper can qualify for the description 'user unfriendly'. Perhaps you mean it hampers your ability to count correctly? In the issue to which you refer there were five features on flight sims, eleven on strategy games, and six on adventure games. Balance, it seems, is in the eye of the beholder.

Carts before horses

I am writing to tell you how excited I am about *Strategy Plus*. I play both Sega Genesis and PC games, and I always choose a thinking game over a hand-eye coordination test. The other mags that I subscribe to rarely give me any info about strategy, interactive adventure or role-playing games – how frustrating.

My first issue of *Strategy Plus* (12) read like a fascinating book of short stories, and I can't wait for my next one. I especially love the way that the magazine covers games so completely. Most mags just show a screen shot or two along with a few sentences and an over-simplified rating system.

While I like a boiled down, quick glance rating system, I want text to back it up. I love reading your coverage describing play mechanics, high points, low points, and whatever other comments were inspired while playing. *Strategy Plus* seems to be devoting as many words as it feels are needed to cover a game adequately – that's the way it should be.

Maybe you could consider including a small section on cartridge strategy games. I know that, for the most part, cart games that claim to be real strategy games fall short of PC game standards, but speaking from experience with the Genesis system, some are starting to make the grade.

Also, with the dramatic increase in storage space coming with CD-ROM players, I think cart game systems might merit your attention.

Samuel Bauer
Colorado Springs
CO 80919, USA

Smart idea. Look out for a survey of brainy games for the Genesis in the next issue.

Yank it about

I had a very pleasant surprise the other day: I received my first copy of *Strategy Plus* – I don't even remember ordering it, although I suppose I must. Anyhow, I must say I very much appreciate the different flavour of the articles – I especially liked the *Bums and roses* in the Upfront section, as the British humour is refreshing for a change.

I read the **Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe** article with interest, but the comment about the utility to back up pilots struck me as odd because all the pilot files are standard DOS and can be copied and renamed as many times as you like.

I made a BAT file and made a dozen copies of my best pilots, using a different name for every one. I now have a full squadron of lieutenant colonels with a score of 4000.

The American pilots have an extension of USA, while the Germans are GER. The bomber and fighter pilots have the same extensions. By the way, does anyone have any good bomber pilots to share – how about a swap for a good fighter pilot?

Has anyone survived the mission to Clarion? I haven't, even with my duplicated squadron of P51Ds. This one is a tough nut to crack; I may never make it, but I love to keep trying.

Allen Fish
Immokalee
Fl 33934, USA

That Commander Crunch guy has ejected too many times without a helmet.

Mind over matter

I'm an educated, intelligent person – a professional qualified psychotherapist and member of MENSA – whose main interest is playing computer

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games on my Amiga 500 1Mb. I've a vast collection which I add to fussily and regularly.

My mainstay is 'brain games'. Although shoot-em-ups improve reflexes and concentration, games like strategies, war, simulations, logic puzzles (Powermonger, Shanghai and so on) require immense patience, skill and intelligence. They teach utilization of memory, determination and confidence, and, in some cases, history, geography, politics, statistics and initiative.

Yet they are often looked down on as childish by people who prefer other pastimes – people who dismiss computer games as a waste of time, even though they require more skill, education, intelligence and patience than many other pursuits.

Likewise, computer games, especially platform ones, are often chosen purely for fun, but so what? Why must this fun be disguised when playing darts and so on is openly enjoyed by fans who are respected for it or despite it. I've nothing against any form of entertainment or education, but surely it should be a case of live and let live.

Carmen Brulez
Ilford
Essex IG3 8PT, UK

Committable Christian

Please remove my name from your mailing list as I no longer wish to receive your magazine.

My family and the friends of my teenagers enjoy reading about the new games and so on, but as a Christian I am responsible for the moral atmosphere in my home.

Some of the advertisements in your publication violate these moral standards, for example **Sex Olympics**. This was both graphically depicted and imaginatively described, with a promise of more from Free Spirit.

Dennis Lovell
Logan
Iowa 551546, USA

Blimey! I wonder what they do in Logan at night?

Lost in the ozone

I am getting fed up with the derogatory tone of the editors of this magazine. Like MJ Nicholls, writing in issue 13, I am disappointed with the direction the magazine has taken over the past four or five issues.

I would have written earlier, but I didn't want to add to the growing body of irritable correspondence and dismissive editorial replies.

Despite claiming deference to readers' wishes, as your excuse for the changes of content, you don't strike me as people who either encourage or respond to readers' views. You may be gaining many new readers at the moment, but here is one old one you have lost.

John Fielder
Lewisham
London SE13 5AR, UK

You're absolutely right. The regime that runs **Strategy Plus** *makes Pol Pot look like the Salvation Army. Reader polls, reader surveys, free classifieds, increased pagination, reduced cover price, forget it! These guys just don't give a stuff. Just look at the way they've plonked that filthy* ***Sex Olympics*** *ad right opposite the letter from that nice Mr Lovell. It just makes me sick.*

Bucking the trend

I have recently been reduced to playing **Buck Rogers** from SSI, the only SSI game I have played except for **Eye of the Beholder**. I thought **EOB** was a disappointment in some respects (being allowed to 'win' without having solved most of the puzzles was a bit odd. It's quite startling how little you *need* to do to finish the game.) but **Buck Rogers** is a crime against humanity.

The combat is interminable and 'quick' mode doesn't always work well. I finished the game mostly out of mild curiosity to see what happened. The 'puzzles' are close to non-existent, and the whole game is just irritating.

If this is typical of the other SSI games, I must make a note not to buy any others. Maybe I am too much of a text-adventure player, but I couldn't see the appeal of **Buck Rogers**.

Adam Atkinson
Rome, Italy

Board management

Although I can see that *Strategy Plus* has been moving towards a totally computer-based format, the way it dropped boardgames was a let down. Not from the point of actually dropping them (*Gamesman* has taken over this space), but just the way it was done.

Games International #16 said that *Strategy Plus* would be 'devoting almost as much space to boardgames as we do at present". The first issue of *Strategy Plus* said 'the extent of this coverage being determined by the number of new releases'. I continued my subscription based on this information.

Up to issue 8, all seemed OK. An average of just over five reviews an issue, and as many as seven reviews in issue 8.

But when issue 9 was down to three reviews, and then issue 10 had only one, I realized that the computer games banner on the cover of issue 11 was the sign that the magazine had dropped board games – and I was right.

There was no mention of this in any editorial – perhaps you thought no one would notice. You could at least have stuck with boardgames for a full year to honour what was said in *GI16* and *SP1*. *Gamesman* is finding plenty to review, so it can't be lack of new releases.

I realize that you must feel that computer and boardgames don't go together any more, but the way in which you have sneakily dropped boardgames has disappointed me.

David Cohen
Reading
Berkshire RG1 6HF, UK

Apologies all around. The dumping of boardgames was handled badly. Anyone who subscribed purely for the boardgames will get a refund on request.

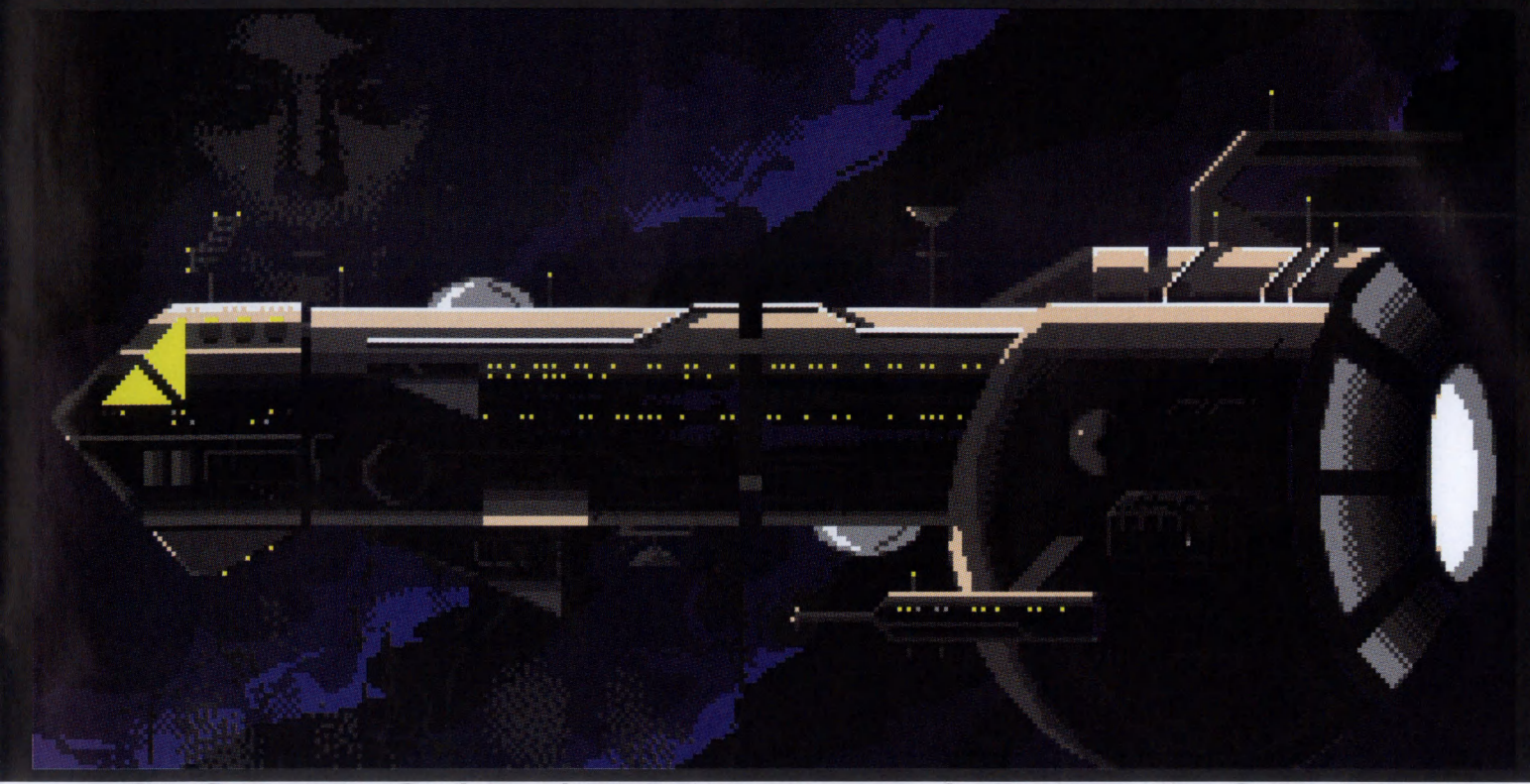
At the present time we are looking into the possibility of bringing out a bimonthly subscription-only mag that will cover boardgames.

Harpooned

Whenever I try to run Harpoon in high-res EGA mode on my Elonex 386/16, the text in the windows is scrambled and illegible. Three-Sixty says there is a compatibility problem with some VGA cards and that there is no solution. Has anybody else had this problem, and is there any solution in sight?

Mark Baker
Crook
Durham DL15 9TS, UK

For once this is a hardware problem. Its down to the VGA card that Elonex supplied with the machine. They now have a new card, give them an earful and you might get a new one for free, otherwise it'll cost about thirty quid for an 'upgrade'.



IS OUR GALAXY PREPARED FOR THE SEX OLYMPICS?

It's time for the Sex Olympics to begin again. However, this year the infamous Dr. Dildo has entered the competition as part of his devious plot to control the Universe. If he can keep his batteries fully charged, he has an excellent chance of accomplishing his goal. Thinking quickly, Headquarters called upon Captain Brad Stallion, wooer of women, and eradicator of evil to represent the Earth in this inter-galactic frolic. And of course, Brad Stallion never goes anywhere without his legendary space ship, the "Big Thruster".

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Sex Olympics combines sexual, tongue-in-cheek humor, adult (R-rated) graphics, unusual sound effects and an icon-driven point-and-click interface to create a game that's a little different than your usual fare. To keep the game interesting, there are three different levels of play, and the locations of clues and objects change each time you play.

Why not compete in the ***Sex Olympics***, where a little metal medallion isn't your only reward?

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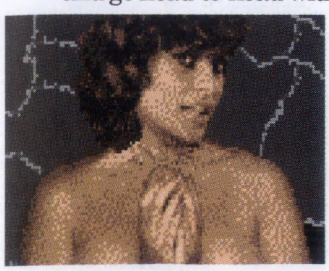

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Reader Service No. 35

Leisure Suit Larry 5

Passionate Patti does a little undercover work

By Theo Clarke

Did you suspect that subliminal messages in popular music were inciting the youth of America to Just Do Drugs? It is all a fiendish plot by The Mob but the FBI has assigned Passionate Patti to the case. Our children should soon be safe.

I first met Patti when she was a pianist entertaining Dr Nonookee on Nontoonyt Island at the end of **Leisure Suit Larry Goes Looking For Love (In All The Wrong Places)**. This is known to the cognoscenti as **LSL2**... which is odd, because the first Leisure Suit Larry game was known as LL.

Designed by
Al Lowe

Published by
Sierra OnLine

Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
VGA and MCGA

Supports
Sound Blaster, Roland, and Adlib sound boards

Notes
Mouse and hard disk required

Leaving aside the vagaries of naming conventions, it must be said that Patti had no more than a bit part in her first appearance.

Larry has now left his job at Sierra and is working for PornProd Inc, producer of America's sexiest home videos. His new job is menial but things look brighter when the management decide that they need to find a beautiful hostess with no discrimination to present their new range. The best way to test a woman's scruples is to see if she will fall for the least appealing man in the world. Larry considers the job to be an honour and proudly sets off to have flings on film with the three women shortlisted for the position.

Throughout the game the point of view switches between Larry and Patti as they undertake their separate missions and they are only reunited in the final sequence at the White House. We still are not told the whereabouts of **LSL4**, although it is suggested that the master disks were lost.

This is the first Larry adventure to use the Sierra Creative Interpreter with its no-typing interface, as used in **King's Quest V** and **Space Quest IV**.

A ruler of icons at the top of the screen gives options to look, walk, feel/use, speak and take as well as system control functions like saved game handling and animation speed. The user clicks on the icon then clicks on the object to which it is to be applied.

The concept is simple and appealing although there is a vocal minority of keyboard enthusiasts who loathe it. The point and click interface makes a mouse an essential accessory. The pointer movement is unmanageably clumsy when controlled by the cursor keys.

The game is far less challenging than previous releases in the series. This is not a feature of the simpler interface; the puzzles are more direct. In general the key to any puzzle lies nearby. All of this simplicity, however, is of no avail to the users that fall foul of a vicious error in the game's introduction.

Larry starts the game in the lobby of PornProd Inc where there is a coffee percolator (among other things). A call for coffee comes from the board room. I clicked on the coffee pot and was told that there was no coffee pot there. Curious, thought I, and clicked again. This time Larry picked up the pot without hitch but I was feeling nervous.

I watched the animated sequence in which Larry is chosen to interview the three women and ends with him back in the lobby, filled with enthusiasm. 'Hallo, again' said the game and it asked for the password. The password? What password? I read all of the documentation. No mention of a password there. I phoned the Sierra UK Hintline. It didn't answer. Nor did the Sierra UK Bulletin Board. I deleted the whole lot and reinstalled. This time I did not skip anything. This time the message asked if I wanted to protect the game with a password. I was on my way but an inexperienced player would have been completely stuck.

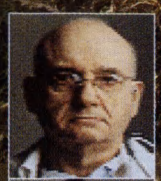
This was the last problem of any sort that I encountered. The game is huge but there was enough space on my hard disk to accommodate the 8Mb of game files. The game can be played by installing just 1.2Mb to hard disk and running the rest from floppies but there was far too much disk swapping when I tried it. Similarly, the game can be played without a sound card but few people will be able to cope with the incessant squeaking of the PC speaker. Do yourself a favour, buy a Roland sound card or disable the sound. Sound enthusiasts have about a dozen incidental tunes to choose when Larry is in his studio. These sound pretty good through an Adlib card but the Roland sounds truly amazing.

Speed merchant

The review copy was the 256-colour VGA version. Owners of earlier graphics devices have to order the 16 colour version from Sierra but even VGA owners may have problems with the speed of the full version. The animation was irritatingly slow on a 10MHz 286 machine but was all right on a 33MHz 386 – **LSL5** is best played on a highly specified machine because lesser machines will greatly mar the pleasure afforded by the game. This is the price of progress. **LSL5** is an accessible, funny game of high quality and it needs complex equipment to deliver this level of functionality.

Committed players of the Larry series will enjoy the witty graphics and the in-jokes about previous episodes enough to feel content with the relative lack of challenge. Complete newcomers will be sucked into Al Lowe's warped world of mild sexual innuendo and ribald humour. ❑

It's a Human Zoo



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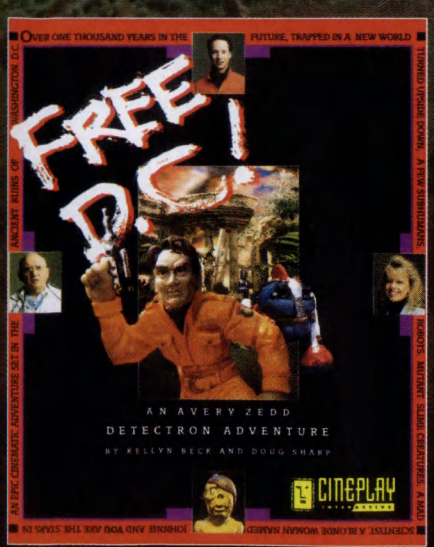
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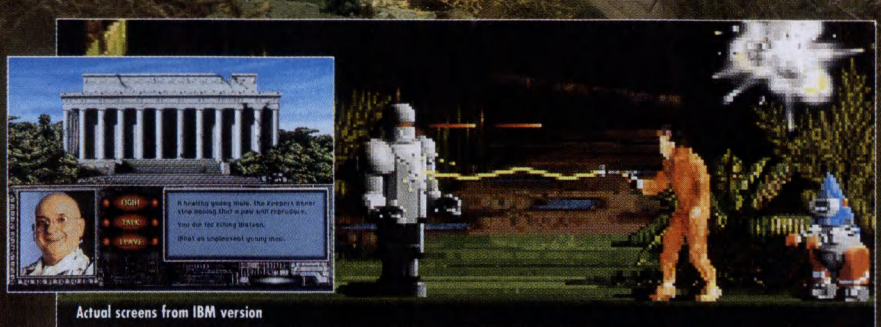

Actual screens from IBM version

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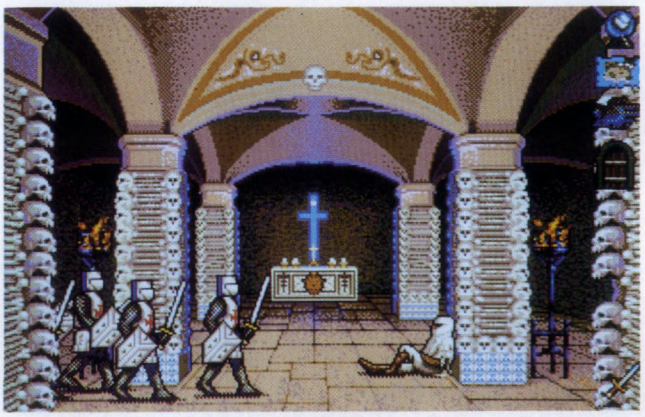
Vengeance of Excalibur

Arthur mo', this looks familiar

By Theo Clarke



Designed by
Alan Clark, Robert Clardy and John Conley

Developed by
Synergistic Software

Published by
Virgin Mastertronic

Systems
IBM PC; Amiga and Atari ST to follow

PC graphics
VGA, MCGA, EGA and Tandy

Supports
Roland, Adlib, Covox and Tandy 3-Voice sound boards

Arthur's successor, King Constantine, has been turned to stone by a demon that also abducted the court sorceress, Nineve, and made off with the treasures of Albion. Arthur's Helm, the great gauntlets, Excalibur and even the Holy Grail are gone. The kingdom is ailing.

Welcome to **Vengeance of Excalibur,** an adventure in which four knights take passage to Bayonne in the south of France and march through the Pyrenees to Moorish Iberia in pursuit of the lost treasure.

The player selects four knights and guides them through their quest in this sequel to **Spirit of Excalibur**. Players of the earlier game may note that **Vengeance of Excalibur** uses the same engine as its predecessor and presents a new set of puzzles in Spain instead of England. Apart from the locale and the plot, the new game is the same as the first. No better. No worse. And no different for all but the most loyal enthusiasts.

Spirit of Excalibur players who have left the completed game on their hard disk all summer can import the knights developed there into the start of **Vengeance of Excalibur**.

The manual and the beautiful mock medieval map of the Iberian peninsula are more than attractive elements of the charmingly courteous security mechanism. The manual provides essential advice about the party's objectives. It is unusually well-written and illustrated with attractive illuminations. It covers the game mechanics, the players objectives and an accurate commentary on historical aspects of the period.

Once again the game is presented as a series of episodes, each of which must be completed before progressing to the next. The party arrives at Bayonne, recruits mercenaries and stamps all over a fortified town in which one of the villains is lurking.

In the second episode the knights hunt the magic that dispels the enchantment on Nineve. Then they fight through an undead army to regain another treasure. The fourth episode involves a quest to enlist further aid to chase a moorish thief and the next one involves recovering the shield stolen by a turncoat ally.

The final episode is the battle to kill the Shadowmaster that is the source of all the evil. But before the great enemy can be overcome the party must reforge Excalibur with a fragment of heaven. The full plot is a ripping yarn.

Did I say that the game is very like **Spirit of Excalibur**? Players who know that game may choose to skip the next four paragraphs...

Glass eye

The base screen is a map of the Iberian peninsula with just five icons to display the status of any group, save or retrieve a saved game, change the game speed or direct the party to visit a location or character. Clicking on the magnifying glass and moving it to any settlement displays the animated scene for that place.

The animated scenes can have up to four icons that display status, return to the map, bring up the menu of character actions or take the active party inside any significant building at that location. Once inside the building the party can move around by clicking on any doorway or stairs.

It is a simple interface. Combat is also simple; the program can do it all automatically or the player can make rudimentary actions by pressing the mouse buttons. Victory in combat enhances combat ability but there are other characteristics to consider. The knights must maintain and develop their nobility, faith, armour and health if they are to be successful.

The game is dark and ugly in EGA but the delicate colouring of the VGA and MCGA versions is entrancing. The clever permutations of a limited set of sprites against a small portfolio of backgrounds yields a surprising variety of scenes in all the graphics modes. Knights are always represented by the same fully animated sprites of full plate mail but each character carries a uniquely patterned shield in the VGA/MCGA versions.

Vengeance of Excalibur is a challenging game that is more concerned with strategy and resource management than with puzzle solving and the usual activities of adventure gaming. It is so similar to its predecessor that this review is almost redundant but it must be emphasized that both games suffer badly from the try-die syndrome. The only way to learn the best way through the episodes is to make fatal mistakes, restore a saved game and try another approach until a working strategy is developed. This can be deeply frustrating.

Newcomers to either game are recommended to start with **Spirit of Excalibur** and only buy this if they are keen to have more of the same with the added pleasure of further developing favourite knights.

One excursion through the Arthurian legends is exciting; two may be overkill. ❑

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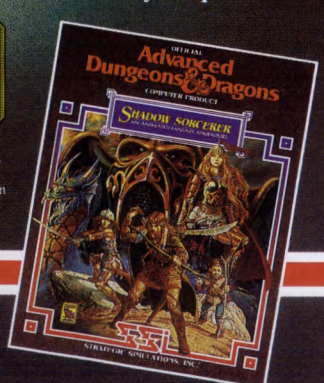

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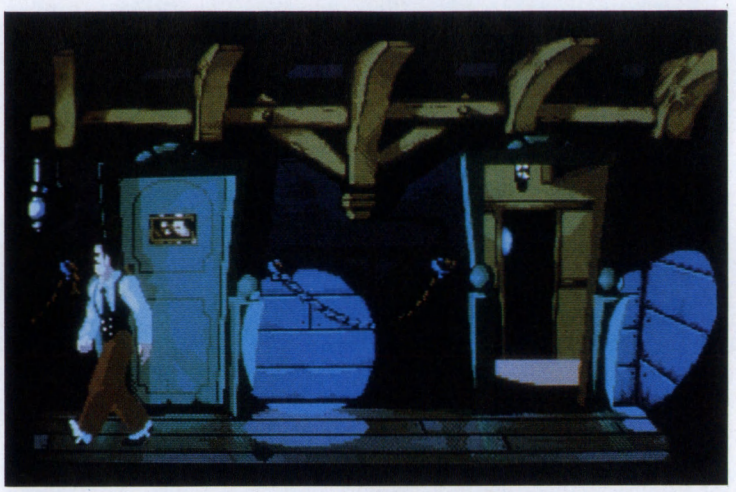
Cruise for a Corpse

Fishy business

By John Scott



Published by
Delphine Software

Designed by
Paul Cuisset, Denis Mercier and Philippe Chastel

UK distributor
US Gold

US distributor
To be announced

Systems
Amiga; IBM PC and ST to follow

PC graphics
VGA, EGA

Supports
Adlib soundcard; mouse

Notes
John Scott lives in Ireland

The adventure genre has always, from the earliest days of the **Colossal Cave** classic adventure, been dominated by science fiction and fantasy. Just about every goblin, orc, malfunctioning robot or psychotic computer ever dreamed up by the fevered minds of the pulp writers must by now have put in an appearance in some adventure or other.

Among the many games boxes on my shelves that offer opportunities to save various worlds from various Dark Lords, uncover priceless princesses and rescue beautiful treasures, another type of adventure appears from time to time. This type offers me the chance to step into the shoes of a Sherlock Holmes, a Jane Marple, or a Columbo.

I suppose reading a detective novel is by its very nature a more cerebral exercise than flipping through the average sci-fi or fantasy romp. Perhaps that's why I've never really felt that any of the detective adventures live up to their promise. Sierra's **Police Quest**s are very satisfying, but are more action-oriented than the cold-blooded sifting of motives, opportunities and alibis so essential to the true detective yarn.

Perhaps this is why I was so happy to discover Delphine Software's **Cruise for a Corpse**. It has so many of the old time detective characteristics: the closed claustrophobic world of a fairly small sailing ship; a limited cast of characters, each of whom eventually seem to be more full of secrets than Laura Palmer; and finally (of course) the mysterious murder of the wealthy host. What more could any aspiring sleuth ask for?

Beaten to a pulp

This adventure should have immediate appeal for all such potential detectives, particularly those of the Agatha Christie school of deduction. Indeed, the hero of this tale, one Raoul Dusentier, seems to have more in common with Hercule Poirot than could be accounted for by coincidence alone. He is fussy, meticulous, and more than a little cranky (how often he's refused to carry out my instructions because he didn't want to get his hands dirty or greasy!). As the game begins, Raoul has himself been dealt a nasty blow on the head, and thus gets off to a shaky start in his exploration of the vessel the Karaboudjan III.

This is my first experience of a Delphine game, though I'd heard good things about the company's other products, and on loading up, I was very impressed by the sound and the graphics. The latter really are quite superb, and Delphine's Cinematique engine is a pretty good description of the game's movie-like presentation.

In **Cruise for a Corpse** the system has apparently been updated and extended from that seen in **Future Wars** and **Operation Stealth**. Everything is achieved through a point and click interface – one minor quibble here is that sometimes the on-screen clues are so small that not only are they hard to see, but that a steady hand is needed to click on them!

There are two major aspects to the game. First, there are all the usual adventure tasks, such as a locked door whose key must be found, and a cine-projector whose parts must be found and assembled to get it working.

Second, there is the interaction with fellow passengers, once they are located. Choosing the talk option provides a list of possible topics for discussion. Comments made by suspects and items found around the ship will add to this list. Thus if one discovers from Mr X that Mrs Y has a drink problem, it becomes possible to ask Mrs Y (and everybody else) about her problem.

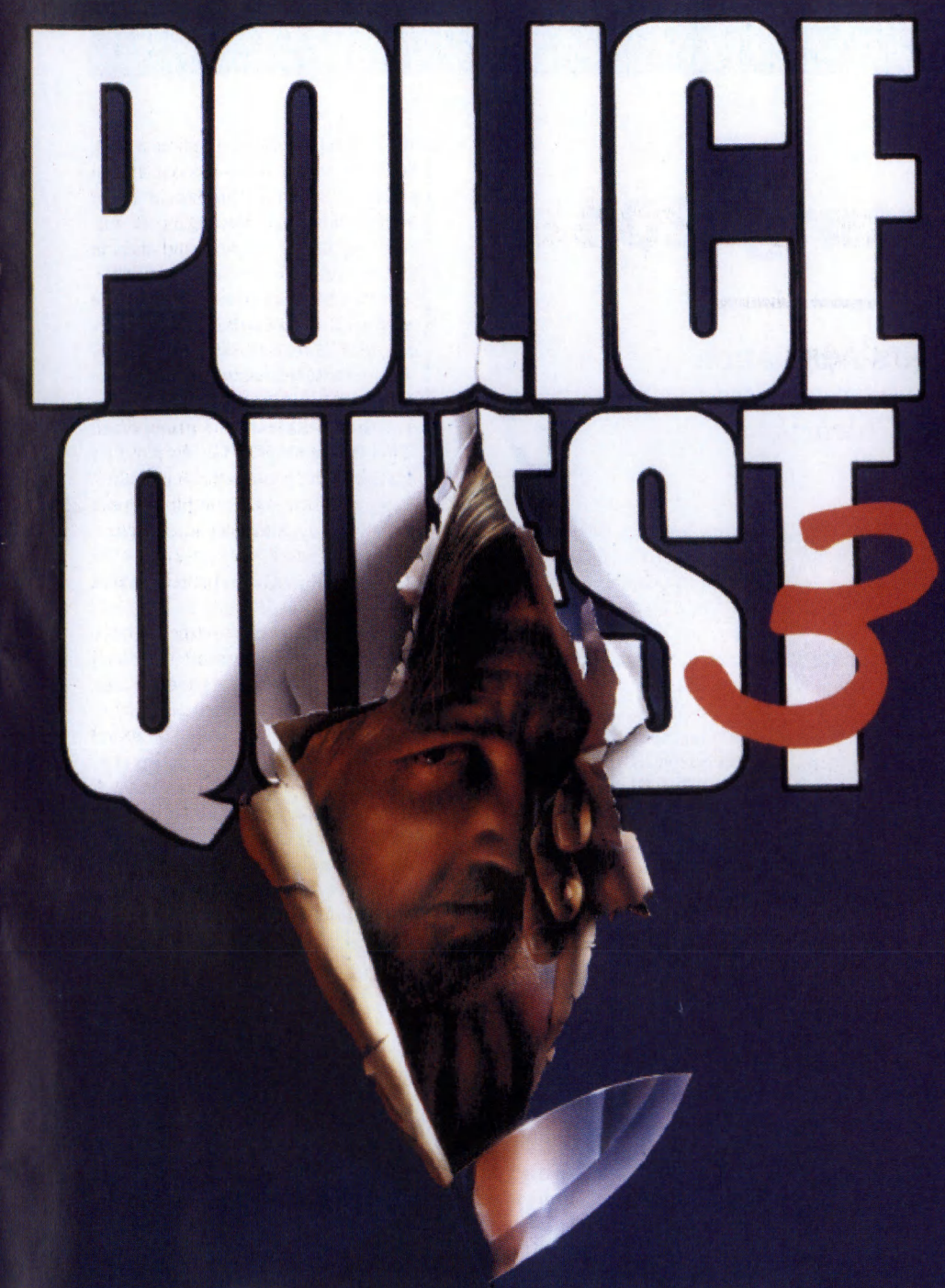
The whole thing has obviously been thought out every clearly, and pains have been taken to eliminate those niggling chores that can so often become a needless frustration in adventure games. For example, to get from deck A to deck D it's not necessary to march Raoul all round the ship, through decks B and C, which is tedious and time-consuming. Instead, a click calls up a map, and a click on the map will relocate Raoul in a fraction of the time.

The game begins at 8am and ends at 6pm, but the clock only advances when Raoul does something right. Ask the right question, find a clue, and time will march forward by 10 minutes or so.

So far my only major grouse is that **Cruise for a Corpse** is so damn hard! This is that most difficult thing I've played since **Murders in Space** – a game that achieved a fiendish difficulty level mainly by withholding essential player information!

I don't yet suspect this of **Cruise for a Corpse**, but is it mere coincidence that both games emanate from France? ❑

POLICE QUEST 3



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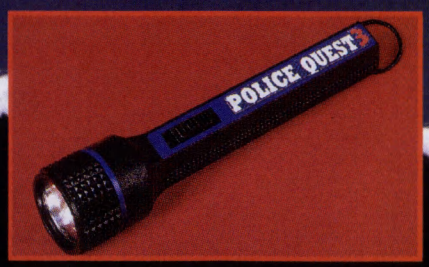

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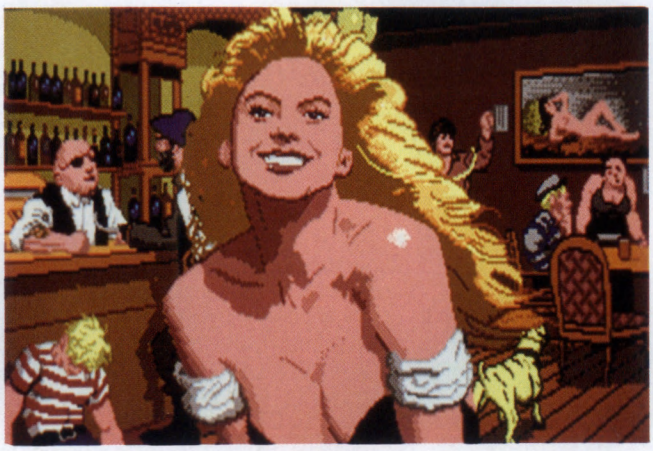
Spellcasting 201

The Sorcerer's Appliance

By Greg Ellsworth



Designed by
Steve Meretzky

Published by
Legend

Distributor
Accolade

Systems
IBM PC, Tandy or compatible with 512k Ram, hard disk with 5Mb

PC graphics
VGA, EGA, CGA, MCGA, Tandy, mono

Supports
RealSound; Adlib, Sound Blaster, Roland MT-32 and MT-100, CM-32L, LAPC-1 MIDI sound boards; Microsoft mouse driver built-in

In the fall of 1038, students from all over Peloria are drawn back to that institute of higher learning, Sorcerer University. For some it will be a year of intense studying to better themselves and make their parents proud. For others, it will mark the start of another year of fraternity parties and many extracurricular activities.

But for one Ernie Eaglebeak, aspiring sorcerer, this is the year that will give new meaning to 'hell week'. Having had a very unusual freshman year, Ernie would have settled for a fall term of nothing but hitting the books to further his education. No such chance in the new game from Legend, where the player finds himself challenged and amused again by Steve Meretzky's puzzles and puns.

Phart power

The player's objectives at the beginning of the game seem ordinary enough at first, and only later in the week does an evil plot slowly reveal itself. Each day, Ernie must complete a task to pass his initiation into the notorious Hu Delta Phart fraternity, and these assignments are difficult enough. Every assignment is sabotaged daily by the HDP pledgemaster Chris Cowpatty, who is determined to see that the freshman hero becomes a sophomore disgrace.

While trying to find a way to outwit Chris each day, the player must attend his classes and still make time to handle an extra assignment. Otto Tickingclock, succeeding Aaron Snowbunny as president of Sorcerer University, has given the Ernie the task of discovering the secrets of the Sorcerer's Appliance, now housed in Ivorytower Laboratory. In addition to the Five Great Attachments found in the previous game, **Spellcasting 101: Sorcerers Get All The Girls**, the player must find the lost Greater Attachments which unlock even more of the device's powers.

The puzzles are not a great deal more difficult than in **S101**, but the game is made harder by its more linear structure and the much tighter time constraints. This makes it a different challenge from the freshman year, where most of the game took place off campus and for the most part the player had all the time needed to complete each segment.

Whereas I rarely needed to save the game in **S101**, in **S201** the player will probably need to restore often when he finds out that he has missed an important event or can't retrieve a certain object in time. This time the classes are not just a side attraction, valuable information and an important item can only be obtained by attending them faithfully.

The initiation assignments and the investigation of the appliance are intertwined – when the player successfully finishes the daily task he will find one of the Greater Attachments, which in turn allow him to use a new power of the appliance for the next day's challenge. The big crisis comes on rather suddenly, although the observant player can find some clues during the week. Following the scheme of Legend's previous releases, the end game is very tightly timed, with not a move to be wasted. Also in the same style, the player is subjected to a mandatory dialogue by the villain, similar to the wrap-up seen in old mystery movies.

Of course, **Spellcasting 201** is not a typical straight-laced puzzle solving text adventure. Steve Meretzky has liberally dosed the game with the humour he applied to Infocom's **Leather Goddesses of Phobos** and **The Hitch-hiker's Guide To The Galaxy**. The game may be played in either nice or naughty mode, both equally enjoyable with text and graphics to match.

As the motto of Hu Delta Phart states (translated from the Ancient Pelorian): 'More babes, more brewskis, more bad jokes!' I wonder what Steve's college days were like, and how he ever graduated MIT?

Puzzling behaviour

Copy protection is integrated into the story and puzzles, and at several spots the game text makes it clear to the player that without the real documentation (a map, a music book and a class schedule) he isn't going to get very far. This should be a fair deterrent to pirates, and it didn't detract from the game's enjoyment at all, but made the puzzles more interesting.

The game interface is the same one that was originally introduced in **S101** and refined in **Timequest**. The player may make selections by using a mouse to click on objects in the graphic scene, to click on a directional compass or build sentences from menus. The keyboard may be used to emulate a mouse or the player may type input the old fashioned way. The display may be configured to show text only, text and graphics, and the mouse menu may or not be displayed. Even with an IBM speaker only the RealSound music and sound effects are quite entertaining and the game supports the major sound cards as well.

This is the third adventure game from Legend, and the company shows no sign of slowing down or skimping on quality. This is the first Meretzky game that I know of that uses a stricter linear style instead of the usual open ended one. While this makes for a more challenging game, it is still quite enjoyable as the difficulty is balanced by the outrageous humour. This game was larger than **S101**, but alas, it was still too short for me. ❑

In *The Magic Candle*, 1989's role-playing game of the year, you saved the lands of Deruvia from the foul archdemon Dreax! But that triumph is past!

Now the Candle Burns at the Other End!

Actual photos from IBM/VGA version.

The Magic Candle II

THE FOUR AND FORTY

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Reader Service No. 10

Suspicious Cargo

A Jonah on board

By John Scott

CARGO
INSIDE COFFIN
You are in a coffin. Not the dead-person style of coffin, with brass handles and everything, but the hotel variety: a tiny sleeping cylinder three feet in diameter and six or so feet long. A vinyl mattress covers the floor, stained with unmentionable substances. A small compartment for personal possessions is above your head, right next to a grubby mirror. There is an illuminated pad next to a small door at one end, which, by the way, is the only way out of this rathole.
(More)

Designed by
Dave Lincolm, Gareth Davis and Martin Cowan

Published by
Gremlin Graphics

US distributor
To be announced

Systems
Amiga and ST; IBM PC version to follow

Suspicious Cargo is a fairly conventional adventure game set in a cyber-punk(ish) near future. The world has been ravaged by the Hyper Z Virus and, in order to combat it, several of the larger medically oriented megacorporations developed antidotes.

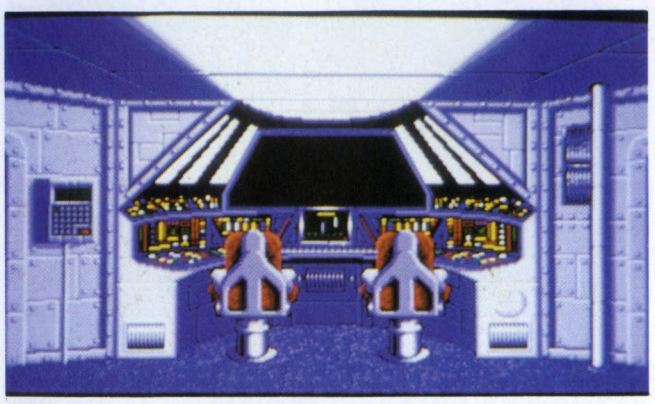
Prompted by pecuniary interests rather than philanthropy they made no moves to mass produce it, but instead acted together to protect and exploit their monopoly of the vaccine.

As a result of this shrewd marketing strategy the big corporations increased their influence and power beyond all previous limits and expectations. Only they could provide a country with the much needed cure, but it wasn't cheap. That meant more megabucks for the megacorps.

The vaccine also had one fortunate side-effect (fortunate for the megacorps) – it was highly addictive. More and more was needed everywhere, and the corporations began to dictate national policies and legislation. Soon all governments were puppet governments, and the megacorps were running the show.

But soon the inevitable happened: with no one else to fight, the corporations began to fight among themselves.

Soon there was all-out war. Conventional weapons were used, but given the peculiar expertise of the corporations, they began a race to find a new kind of weapon. Now one of them has almost succeeded: after creating a mutant warrior on Titan, it is looking for some fool to smuggle it to Earth for final research without the other corporations finding out.



Rough rider

Enter Jonah Hayes, archetypal space-bum. In this game the player becomes Jonah Hayes as he begins his mission. He has a rough ride ahead of him as he attempts to escape from Titan to Earth orbit. On the way his distractions will include a distress call from a crashed ship, a close encounter with an escaped illegal pet alien, a pirate attack, customs checks, and so on. As it says in the manual: 'A difficult task surely, but with Jonah at the center of things, well, some would say impossible.'

The player interface used in the game allows for either typing or point and clicking (that is, the mouse is clicked on the verb 'open', and a list appears of objects that can be opened – click again on the appropriate item, and the result is given in the text screen). Most output is in the form of text, but at certain locations a flashing icon indicates the presence of a graphic view of the scene.

In addition to this a number of VDUs at the top of the main screen show the faces of other characters in the same location. Depending on the preferences of the player the main screen can be set up in any of three different layouts (in one of them, the text window takes up most of the available space).

Movement is accomplished by either clicking on direction arrows at the bottom of the screen, or by typing the instruction. It isn't necessary to pass through all locations between starting point and destination. Typing 'Go <location>' will describe all locations passed through on the way. 'Run <location>' describes only the final destination and (perhaps) events on the way.

Well equipped

Jonah has nothing if not a big ship. A map icon calls up a view of the ship which reveals Jonah's location and also provides another means of quick movement.

Suspicious Cargo contains a number of arcade sequences. Those I've played were easy enough, even for an old slowhand like me, but pure adventure fans should note that these can be ignored if desired.

Besides the usual disk functions the game has also a save to RAM feature (all adventure games should have this!) and players should expect to use it a lot.

This is a rather unforgiving game – make a mistake, even a simple mistake, or dither too long over an appropriate course of action, and sudden death is the likely result!

Although **Suspicious Cargo** has no major flaws, it didn't make the Earth move for me. The problem might be that this particular kind of plot is burnt out. **Suspicious Cargo** is competently done, but it smacks a bit of more of the same.

I also have to say that I found it just a bit lacking in atmosphere, that elusive quality which adds real magic to adventure gaming. I'm also playing **Rise of the Dragon** at present – an adventure which had me hooked from the first scene. With **Suspicious Cargo** the lack of that kind of magic means that I'm always just too aware that I'm playing a game and not saving the world. ❑

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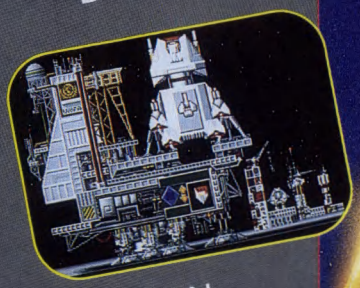
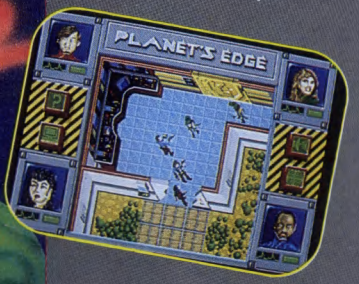


DESIGN



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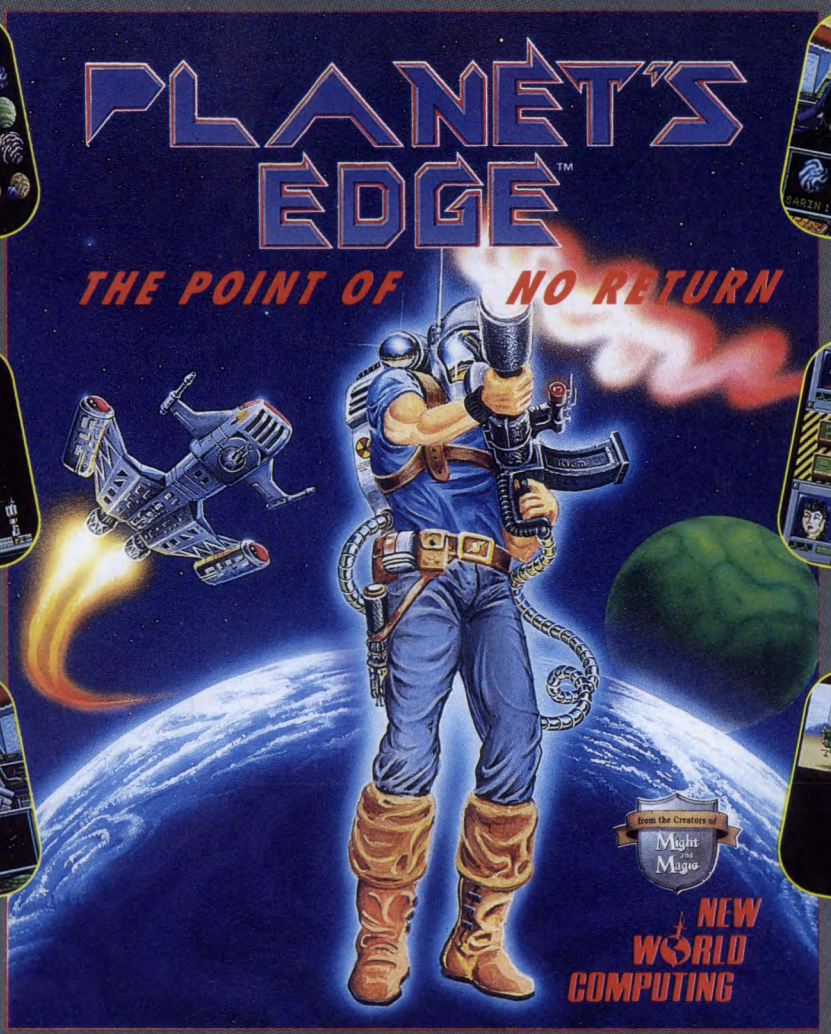

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It is understood that two under-strength but heavily fortified German divisions plus a number of rear area security and support troops defend the sector: All roads in this near trackless wilderness run through Velikiye Luki. The stage is set for a bitterly fought battle on the cold snowy wastes of the Eastern Front.

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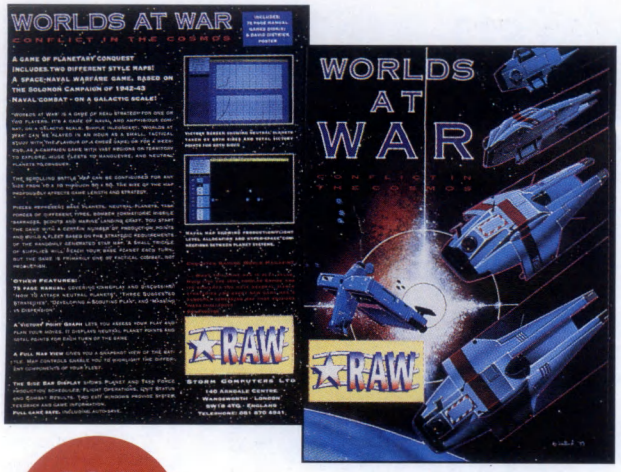

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Other Features:

75 page manual, *covering gameplay and discussing: "How to attack neutral planets", "Three Suggested Strategies", "Developing a Scouting Plan", and "Massing vs Dispersion".*

A Victory Point Graph *lets you assess your play & plan your moves. It displays neutral planet points and total points for each turn of the game.*

A Full Map View gives you a snapshot view of the battle. Map controls enable you to highlight the different components of your fleet.

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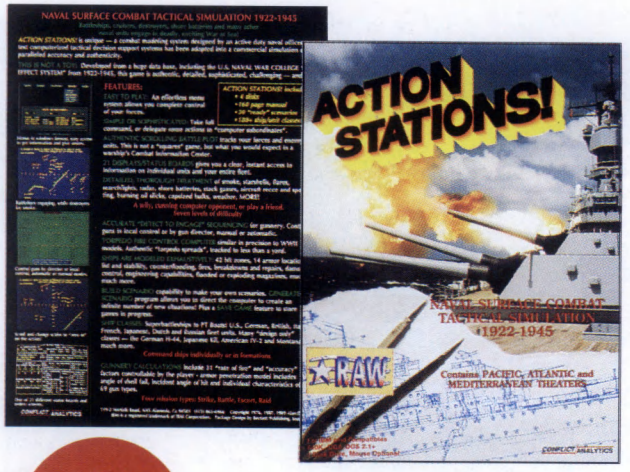
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MAMA SEZ...

Cheats seldom prosper

Mama sez... 'I am not a crook.' Slightly crooked? Perhaps, possibly even warped. I cheat: I don't hack, mind you, just cheat. I confess that I have used walk-throughs, maps, and (gasp) character editors as well as 'utility' programs and have gotten a kick out of it! The **UHS** (**Universal Hint System**) has saved my sanity on numerous occasions. This said, let me add that all of these things can absolutely ruin the play of a game. Matilda says... use them, but don't let them use you.

Two little marvels written to assist the bent adventurer in **Bane of the Cosmic Forge** are a case in point. **Banefix** is a character editor that allows the user to take a saved game file and alter each character's experience point total, gold, spell points, items, statistics, and skills. With a few keystrokes the party can start out in the castle with 100% in all skills as well as 99 000 000 experience points. It's rather a bit of the overkill for a bunch of rats and bats!

Wizrest is a TSR utility program that will restore all of the party's hit points and spell points with a single stroke of a set of user-defined hotkeys. Resting and the concurrent dangers in **Bane** were Mama's major beef with the game. Handstands were the order of the day when **Wizrest** removed the need for the many tedious rest periods that plagued me throughout the game.

Heavy spell

When I began Wizresting instead of resting, my entire strategy changed. Correction. Strategy was no longer part of the game at all. Instead of carefully husbanding spell points and using magic judiciously, the crew threw every spell in the books at every group of adversaries. The physical skills and marvellous weapons they worked so hard collecting were rendered meaningless. Who needs the risk of a fight when a few hundred spell points each will wipe 'em out?

A lot of the tension and excitement of **Bane** is connected with the need to continue plodding and fighting when resources are low. Successful strategy demands a close watch on resources and careful selection of resting places. Group healing spells are not available. This is part of the flavour of the game. In that context, **Wizrest** is tasteless! It is, however, like much else that is tasteless – a lot of fun to mess around with.

Freed from the restrictions of strategy, the party could wander about seeing everything, finding everything and think nothing of tromping through the temple a dozen or more times, whiffing away the bad guys with a book and a look. Fortunately, Mama finished the game once before any of these goodies became available, and really got her money's worth!

In Mama's second and third plays of **Bane**, **Banefix** was used to juice up the party's experience points and gold. The party started out at a million points in the castle and enough gold to clean out Q. At each major new section of the game, **Banefix** doubled the experience points and gold available. With this rather restrained use of the character editor, the pace and balance of the game were still in place.

The fourth playing of the game was when Mama really lost it... having found the 'perfect' party composition and having seen just about all of the game, the goal was to finish each of the six endings with a super party. **Banefix** was used to take each character through several of the professions available and give each enough points to acquire all of the spells and skills in each chosen profession. After the crucial cross–no cross split, **Wizrest** became part of the party's repertoire. The results were awesome, but empty.

MM2ED is a character editor program available for **Might and Magic II**. Its capabilities are spectacular. The program allows all of the same type of adjustments to made to the **MMII** party as **Banefix** did for **Bane**. In addition, every single weapon, artefact and magic item can be added to any character in the party. While this makes for some simple sheep shearing, it takes all of the zip out of the game. Why bother questing for items already in the party's inventory? **MM2ED** became very useful when I decided to replay **MMII** before the release of **Might and Magic III,** just for a tune-up.

One of the major difficulties in **MMII** is the acquisition of enough funds for travel and to provision the party. Another major difficulty is staying alive long enough to advance to the point where the party can take advantage of any ill-gotten gains. A few quick runs of **MM2ED** solved these problems and got the party

through the early parts of the games quickly and efficiently.

Mama resisted the temptation to re-edit the group after the first slight juicing, and enjoyed the replay of **MMII** quite a bit. It wasn't as enjoyable as the first play-through when all was new and every conflict touch and go, but it was enjoyable. Had Mama given in to the temptations of the weapons, artefacts and items, I doubt very much that the replay would have been finished.

Might and Magic III has a built-in character editor. As in **MMII**, there are enhancement fountains. **MMIII** has a group of fountains and wells available in a limited, easily accessible area. A wily player can pump level 10 characters up to level 30 for one day at a time, and at the same time find a fountain or well or spell to enhance each and every character stat. After the party locates the watering holes, it is a simple matter to visit each one before entering a dungeon or cavern, and wiping the floor with the competition.

The drawback to this approach is that most of the enhancements last for only one day or until the party rests. The exceptions to the one-day limit are two of the most important: a well that hypes the hit points (a stoneskin type spell), and the little grass shack of spell points where the party can have a crystal ball jacking up the magic users.

Crook's dream

MMIII is a crook's dream! Not only can the player slash and bash and succeed nearly every time, but strategy and balance are maintained throughout the game. Enhancements are proportional to the earned character levels, and goodies are randomly generated. What a wonderful situation – a fine game and a clean conscience, no add-ons needed! Oh, by the way, the hottest new utility on the Compuserve Gamers Forum is, you guessed it, a character editor for **Might and Magic III**.

In addition to the somewhat dubious advantages of character editors and utilities, the slightly less than ethical (but frequently jubilant) player has access to maps, walk-throughs, and hint files put together by other, more industrious, players. Clue books, available from the game publishers, are also available. Again we have a mixed bag of mixed blessings.

Helpful maps

Mama finds that unannotated maps are the perfect crutch in big, maze heavy games like **Dungeon Master** and **Eye of the Beholder**. Such maps give the player an idea of the lay of the land without taking the suspense and adventure out of the game. Annotated maps of the same games are handy when real help is desperately needed, when a critical key or item just can't be located.

Walk-throughs are wonderful documents, but the better the walk-through, the more likely it is to ruin a game completely. As both a walk-through writer and user, Mama suggests restraint in their use. One of the most detailed walk-throughs around is the one for **Neuromancer**, but using it will absolutely ruin the game for most players. The whole point of the game is discovery – discovery of passwords, software, messages from hackers and AIs. The walk-through contains a list of all that is designed to be discovered, thus making game play superfluous.

Mama says maps are a must when tackling Eye of the Beholder (above and below left)

Mama's favourite form of help in real game play situations is the **Universal Hint System** (**UHS**), a public domain series of machine specific file readers and an ever-growing set of hint files. **UHS** files are game specific and allow the player to select particular puzzles or hints and reveal clues one at a time, each clue a little more specific until the secret is completely revealed. Very similar in affect and effectiveness to the old Infocom Invisible Answer Clue books.

Clue books and compendia have become commonplace. My favourite clue books are the ones comprising the Infocom series. The most useful are those issued for the **AD&D** games from SSI.

The **Champions of Krynn** clue book is excellent. Like the others in the series, the **COK** clue book contains annotated maps, and specific descriptions of quests and solutions. It's handy to have, but dangerous if you give into temptation!

Fair do's

Mama sez, of all the games I have played, my favourites have turned out to be the ones played fair and square – at least the first time through! Repeat play, aided by character editors and utilities can also be fun, but too much of a good thing will ruin the experience.

If a gamer is anxious to see all and find all and not waste any time on things like character development, story or strategy, then by all means go for the assists. If a player wants to *game*, then go for it, naked, broke and hopeful. ❑

TIMEQUEST
A private function

Greg Ellsworth concludes our Timequest walk-through by starting with a romp in 800 AD Rome

After the player convinces Napoleon to meet him in Cairo in order to recover the crown of Charlemagne, and getting Admiral Lord Nelson to take his fleet to Egypt, the private is ready to jump to 1798 AD Cairo. He must have the turban from 800 AD Baghdad, Churchill's lighter from 1940 AD, Admiral Lord Nelson's boarding hook from 1798 AD Dover, and the pass that Napoleon gave him in 1798 AD Rome. From the Interkron: *TS Cairo 1798. Out. N. W. Show pass to soldier.*

Napoleon's waiting for the player, as none of his men have returned from exploring the pyramid. The path to the King's chamber is the same, as is the sequence of tiles to stop the blades. The player needs a way to cross the chasm now that the bridge is gone, and he should have the right items.

If he hasn't already looked at the ruby set into the turban and unravelled it, either *untie turban* or *look at ruby*. The turban unwinds into a long, strong strip of cloth. Retrace the path through the pyramid, Napoleon will follow you: *S. S. W.* (Repeat the tile sequence to stop the blades). *W. Tie turban to hook. Throw hook at strut. Swing over chasm.*

Napoleon crosses after the player does, and spotting his heart's desire in the crevice, wastes no time in grabbing the crown. After all this work, the private still is not going to get it back yet, so he must leave the pyramid and return to the Interkron: *Swing across chasm. E. E. N. N. E. S. In.*

As the player may know, Napoleon's dream of becoming the next Charlemagne were never realized.

If he visited Mussolini's headquarters in 1940 AD Rome, he'll recall there is a museum filled with Napoleonic memorabilia there.

Now, he has caused the addition of Charlemagne's crown, which now has a suitable engraving that will serve as a sign to the waiting emperor in 800 AD Rome. A couple more jumps to steal the crown and put it in the chapel before the priest awakes: *TS Rome 1940. Out. U. SE. N. Get crown. S. NW. D. In. TS Rome 800. Out. U. NW. W. N. Put crown on altar. S. Z until 12:00.*

Charlemagne accepts the crown, interpreting the engraving as a holy sign. The private's job here is done, and he should have straightened out all ten of the events that Vettenmyer tried to alter. The player still must track down Vettenmyer, but he needs to get an item from 1940 Rome. If he looked at the painting in Drexler's office, he should know what it is and where it should be, but it won't be there if he doesn't make sure the Academy lives. Confused? Return to the Interkron: *E. SE. D. In. TS Rome 1361.*

The Academy

No use avoiding it, the player is going to have to take a crash course in philosophy, spanning the entire 3300 years from 1361 BC to 1940 AD. The point of this long education is to prepare the private for his role in the future, and to ensure that the Academy survives through the ages by giving the teacher someone to pass his knowledge on to. This is the true point of the game. If the player doesn't visit the Academy in every time period in order beginning at 1361 BC, he'll find it deserted in the future. From the Interkron: *TS Rome 1361. Out. S. Yes. U. N. In.*

No Rome, no city, nothing but a meadow and no one but an old man sitting on a log, awaiting the opportunity to pass on a little knowledge before he himself passes on.

The private listens to what he has to say, and the Academy survives. He must return to this location at each time setting in order from 44 BC to 1940 AD. When he makes his final visit in 1940, the old man holds the original key. *Ask old man about key* and he will give it to the private, along with a strange explanation. This indeed is the key to great knowledge, as the player will see. But now, he must find Vettenmyer and stop him from activating his back-up plan which will kill both the private and the mad Lieutenant.

Vettenmyer's clues

It's not necessary to collect all 19 clues to find Vettenmyer's hide-out and deduce the password for entry, in fact, the player may already know where he is. Each clue that is found is worth one point, with the exception of the last which is worth two. In addition, there are three mini-quests to complete to gather the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th clues, each worth extra points. Each clue has a numeric reference in it, and when the player puts the first letter of each clue in its proper order he'll have two sentences of two words each. This walk-through will lead the private to each clue in order, then I will reveal what they spell out. From the Interkron:

1. *TS Baghdad 1361. Out. W. S. W. U. X vine. D. E. N. E. In.*

2. *TS Baghdad 44. Out. X wall. In.*

3. *TS Baghdad 1798. Out. W. N. N. X carpet. S. S. E. In.*

4. *TS Peking 1588. Out. N. N. E. Listen. W. S. S. In.*

5. *TS Rome 1215. Out. U. NW. Listen. SE. D. In.*

6. *TS Cairo 1519. Out. X wall. In*

7. *TS Peking 1519. Out. N. N. Z. Get cookie. Open it. X fortune. S. S. In.*

8. *TS Dover 800. Out. SE. X Message. NW. In.*

9. *TS Rome 1588. Out. U. NW. Ask woman for leaflet. X It. SE. D. In.*

10. *TS Dover 452. Out. X Runes. In.* (Whew! Don't lose your head!)

11. *TS Baghdad 452. Out. S. W. X Jug. N. E. In.*

12. *TS Cairo 1588. Out. N. W. X Graffiti. E. S. In.*

13. *TS Cairo 452. Out. N. W. X Carving. E. S. In.*

14. *TS Mexico 452. Out. E. NE. NW. E. NE. SE. W. SE. S. S. S. X Graffiti. N. N. N. NW. E. NW. SW. W. SE. SW. W. In.*

OK, the easy clues are over, except for the 19th. To get the 15th clue, the player must enter the Forbidden City in 1798 AD Peking. The eunuch who guards the entrance will state that the emperor will only see the private if he owes him a favour, so a service must be done for an ancient emperor: *TS Dover 1361. Out. SE. S. S. Get shell. N. N. NW. In. TS Peking 44. Out. N. E. N. Blow conch. S. W. S. In.*

The player has saved Peking from a barbarian invasion, which should absolve his guilt for allowing Genghis Khan into the city 1200 years later. The emperor gives the private his seal, a token of his debt. The player should know what do now: *TS Peking 1798. Out. N. N. N. Give seal to eunuch.*

The honoured guest is led to the emperor who repays the debt with one of the Chinese boxes, which must be opened to

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find more and more boxes with the hope of finally reaching the treasure within: *Open box. Again. Again. Again. Again. Get bar. X bar. S. S. S. In.*

Return to the Interkron to pursue the 16th clue. This involves doing a good deed for a destitute family in 1519 AD Baghdad, which will pay off 69 years later. The player must have the drachma that the Chinese merchant gave him in the 1215 AD Baghdad bazaar in exchange for Cleopatra's aphrodisiac: *TS Baghdad 1519. Out. W. N. N. Buy dates. NE. W.*

Here, a mother cowers in fear with her daughter and son. *Ask mother about girl* to find out what's going on, then *Ask mother about mule* to learn how to control him. Now, to bring the cargo of dates to the family: *E. Get tether. Whisper to mule. SW. NE. W.*

OK, so they won't starve, but the player must hide the girl in the urn. The mule will eat any dates that are dumped on the floor, so lead him out of the house: *E. Drop tether. W. Empty urn. Tell girl to get in urn. Put dates in urn.*

Now the girl is hidden, but the soldiers will spot the extra dates and the deception will be uncovered. The mule will solve that problem: *E. Get tether. Whisper to mule. W. Drop tether. Z until 12:01. E. SW. S. S. E. In.* The private has earned the family's gratitude, and now *Ask boy about himself* to get an idea what's in store. Now the player can find the 16th clue: *TS Baghdad 1588. Out. W. N. N. Z.*

Even if the private had a drachma, he couldn't buy a badge from the vendor to stay in the city without citizenship papers. He is hauled off to the palace, but look, the vizier is the young boy whose sister was saved years ago! He gives the player a badge and he is returned to the bazaar, where he now can roam freely: *NE. X Graffiti. SW. S. S. E. In.*

The 17th clue requires navigating the temple maze one more time, this time in 1215 AD Mexico. Make sure the private has the costume he got from the 800 AD Mexico maze, and the flint knife from the Olmec Indian in 1361 BC Mexico: *TS Mexico 1215. Out. E. NE. NW. E. NE. U. Wear costume. S. Cut thongs.*

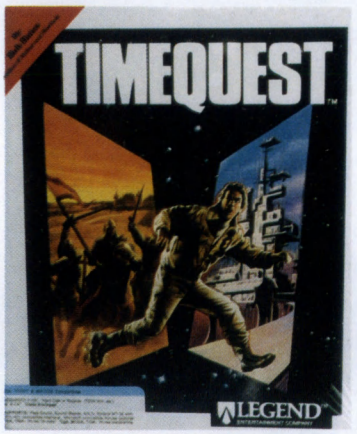
The Quetzlcoatl disguise worked again, allowing the player to free the warrior who promptly disposes of the priest. Now he can see what Vettenmyer left on the altar: *X Altar. N. D. SW. W. SE. SW. W. In.* The eighteenth clue is pretty easy to get: *TS Dover 1361. Out. Se. S. Get chalk. N. NW. In. TS Cairo 800. Out. N. Give chalk to man. X slate. S. In.*

And finally, clue number 19 the player probably already discovered if he did the 1940 AD Dover-Rome segment: *TS Rome 1940. Out. U. SE. X Graffiti. NW. In.*

Put the first letter of each clue in order: *Zeke in tower. Say east.* The hardest clues to find involved the password, of course! If all 10 historical events are fixed and the private has the key, he's now ready to face Vettenmyer and his own destiny... time's a wasting!

Hiding place

The persistent private has fixed Vettenmyer's mischief, setting history straight. He has obtained the key from the old man at the academy, and he now



knows where the Lieutenant is operating from. Although the villain's main plan has failed, he still has an Interkron and must be stopped from wreaking more historical havoc. One more jump to make in this Interkron: *TS Baghdad 1361. Out. W. S. E. Say east.*

There, the private is in! If he had visited here before completing all 10 quests, this is as far as he could go. All 10 transponders removed by the figures in history have returned to their places, and the door to the east is open. Go E and enter the tower room just in time to watch a future version of the player dematerialize. He points at the time machine on the right as he vanishes, and the player hears Vettenmyer coming up the steps. Timing is critical here – when the player passed through the doorway, he made a little jump to 8:00am. *Get on right platform*, and the private escapes by jumping backward 57 minutes, to 7:03am.

Z until 7:59. The player hears the other past version of himself stumble on the step... *Get on left platform.* The previous private will enter, see the current version of himself dematerialize and point at the right platform. So far, so good. The present private jumps 62 minutes into the future, and it is now 9:01am. Somehow, Vettenmyer has been knocked down, and a future version of the player steps on a remote control which opens the case to the Doomsday device which appears to be enabled! The private's key fits the lock: *Put key in keyhole.* The destruct sequence is aborted, and the machine is now disabled. Vettenmyer recovers, grabs his laser, and takes aim. *Get on right platform.* If the private had tried to jump into the future again, Vettenmyer would have destroyed the left platform and the player would never rematerialize, so he must jump back 57 minutes instead. Just as he does, the future private will shout a number, different each game. Remember it, the players' live(s) depend on it!

The present private rematerializes at 8:05, and Vettenmyer is waiting. He straps the player into the chair, and as in most plots where the hero meets the villain, it is obligatory that he *Wait* while the madman rambles. He explains the secret of the key, not knowing that the player already used it to disable his machine in the future, then gives the private a chance to die now or with him when the Doomsday machine goes off. All the player has to do to live a while longer is guess the number that Vettenmyer is thinking of, from one to a hundred. Normally, he'd only have a 1% chance, but the past version of the player has already told the private the number, so *Say* it! Vettenmyer's crazy, but it appears he's honest and trustworthy, at least this time. He uses the remote control to open the case, then activates the Doomsday machine.

Now *Wait* some more. Vettenmyer knows that the past private jumped into the future to 9:01, because he jumped as Vettenmyer entered the room at 8:01am. When he turns his back to meet the past version of the player, *Kick Vettenmyer.* The villain is knocked down, laser out of reach and remote control by the present player's feet. He has bought the previous version of himself a moment in which to use the key to disable the machine, so *Step on remote.* Finally, he must tell the past player Vettenmyer's secret number, *Say* it.

Vettenmyer has one more bright idea to go, but all the player has to do is *Wait.* Realizing that the private must have gotten the key from the old man at the Academy in 1940 AD Rome, Vettenmyer knocks the player out to transport him there in his Interkron. The player now just needs to *Wait* while the story unfolds and Vettenmyer tries to change history yet again. *Take cloak* at the proper time, and the story concludes.

Personally, I smell a sequel... who discovered time travel, locked it in a box, only to give the key to an old man? ❑

Parts one and two of the Timequest walkthrough appeared in issues 12 and 13 of Strategy Plus

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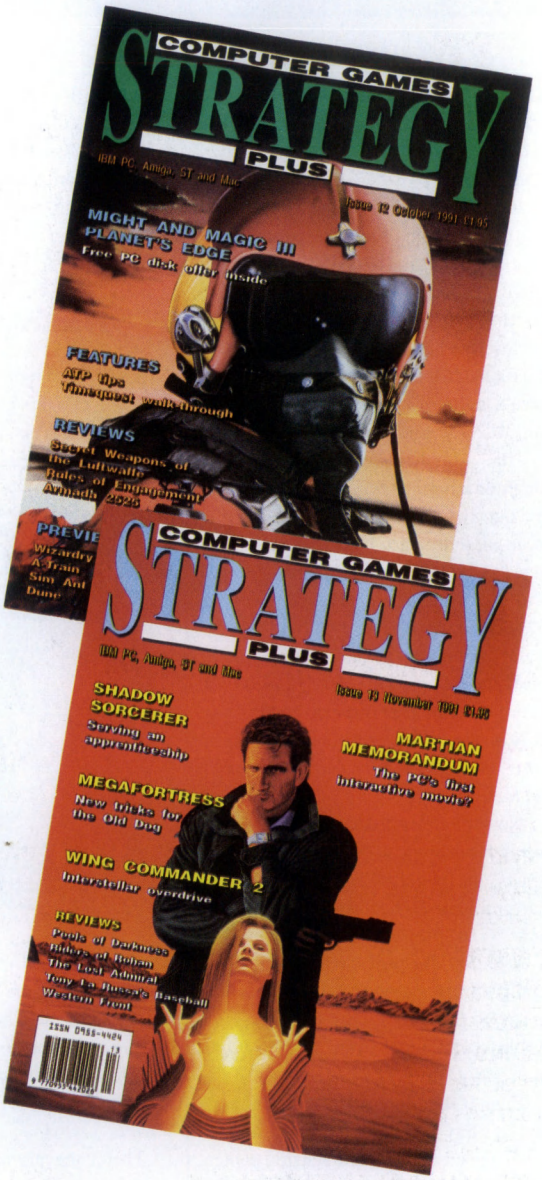

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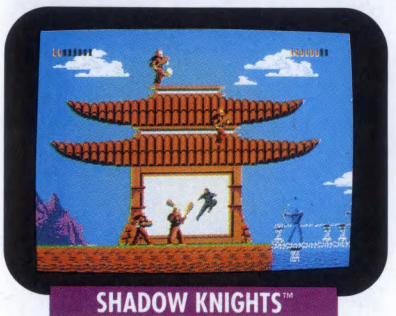

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HIGHER GROUND

Design notes on Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers by Interplay's Scott Bennie

Following the release of **Lord of the Rings, Volume One**, our creative team settled back to receive critical acclaim and brickbats, and to learn from them. We received both, especially from the computer bulletin boards, where people are not afraid to offer opinions (to put it mildly).

Some criticisms were accurate; others, such as 'this game sucks', were not worth the time we wasted reading them. If you're going to criticize, give reasons – we do listen, and helpful criticism is much more useful than emotional outbursts, however heartfelt they may be.

We concluded that the greatest strength of **Lord of the Rings, Volume One** was that people felt that it reflected their ideas of the proper feel of Tolkien, and respected his ideas of Middle-earth.

But it was clear the interface on **Lord of the Rings** needed fine-tuning. Players needed better access to other characters' skills and items.

Other points were also raised. First, the maps were also too large – there was too much wandering through empty areas, although people generally enjoyed the feel of the world.

Second, the combat system was too simple. Although beginners appreciated it, we could add some strategic options and make it more tactically interesting without making it excessively cumbersome.

Third, something needed to be added to the **Lord of the Rings** 'engine' to handle switching between parties, as was common in the second and third books of the trilogy. We believed that switching perspectives between parties would provide a unique perspective shared by no other computer role-playing game, a true cinematic touch, making for exciting cliffhangers.

Fourth, automapping would be a very useful tool for players, and we could come up with a really great looking automap.

Fifth, the original mini-quests made **Lord of the Rings** an unexpectedly non-linear game, as well as being appropriate to Middle-earth, and providing good and original mini-quests was a high priority for the sequel.

Troy Miles, the programmer for the original **Lord of the Rings**, began work on the automapping feature;

Bruce Schlickbernd, our associate producer, redesigned the interface. We hired a lot of very good authors to design the maps, including Allen Varney, editor of the *Space Gamer* during its halcyon days, and one of the most imaginative designers in the adventure game industry, and Ed Greenwood, creator of **AD&D's Forgotten Realms**, who is simply a damn fine writer.

The map art was done (again) by Charles Weidman III, who was anxious to improve on his already impressive art from the first game, and by Cheryl Austin, a newcomer to the computer game field who had done some truly sensational graphic design work. Mark Whittlesey, who replaced Troy Miles as the programmer early into **Two Towers**, developed the spotlight system to handle transitions between the parties as they performed different tasks, and came through for us in a crunch.

As we did our best to fix what we felt were the inadequacies of the original game, we realized the major dilemma of the series: a traditional computer RPG is a reflection of protagonist-centred fantasy fiction, such as Conan, and Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, where the emphasis is on the deeds of the central character and his adventures. Finding treasures and defeating monsters is very important in this sort of fiction.

Lord of the Rings is high fantasy, where the effects of the story on the world are as important as their effects on the character, and the object of the story is the quest, not deeds that make our character rich or happy.

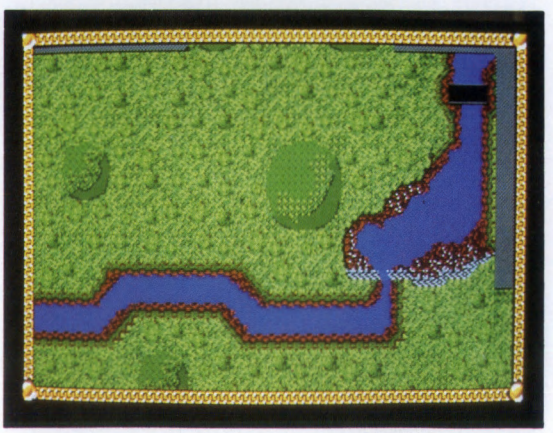
Gamers, particularly those familiar with pencil and paper games such as **Dungeons and Dragons**, are more familiar with the protagonist centred game, and are less likely to appreciate a setting which isn't based on monster-slaying action, dungeon crawling, spending treasures, and advancing levels. We were creating a game that was true to Tolkien, but does that make it a good game?

We're hoping that **Two Towers** has the best of both worlds. Like **Lord of the Rings, Volume One**, **The Two Towers** is a game of quests and exploration; there are major quests (getting the One Ring safely past Minas Morgul, rousing Theoden and defeating Saruman at Helm's Deep); and there are minor quests, such as purging the pool of the Mearas of evil influences. It is possible to finish the game without concluding the minor quests, but they make the game replayable and keep it from being linear (to me, one of the signs of a bad game design). We cut down the size of each gaming area by 40%, but we still believe there is plenty of room for exploration.

Like *The Odyssey* and other classic tales, *Lord of the Rings* is a travel tale, dealing with far-off lands and varying cultures. In **The Two Towers**, we're trying to strike the right balance between giving the player room to explore, and not boring them with too much empty space. In other words, more of the player's time will be spent going through the events of the adventure in this game than in the first game.

When playing **The Two Towers**, don't expect to bash monsters every 30 seconds, though there's plenty of combat. Don't expect your character's stats to roll over like a pinball table (although there is character advancement, usually by completing quests). Do bring a sense of wonder and a willingness to explore. If you do we are sure you will find it worthwhile. ❑

***Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers** will be released by Interplay in the US and Electronic Arts in the UK in early December.*



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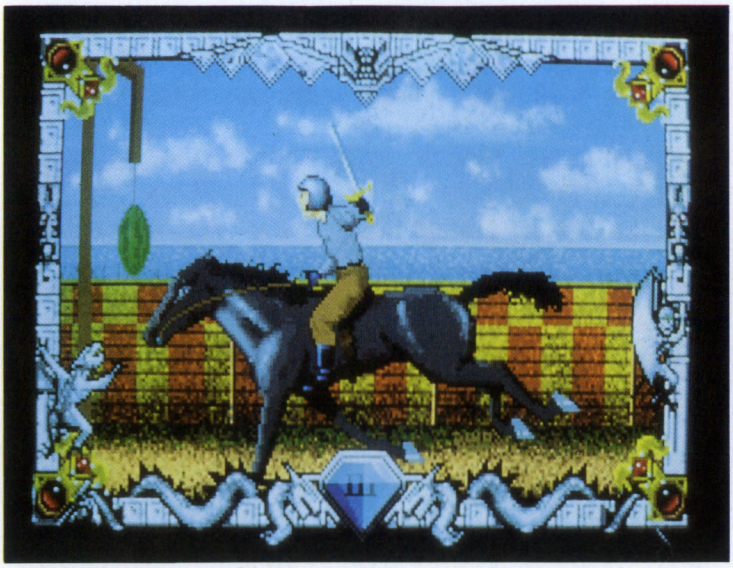

Randy Snow reveals the secrets of Might and Magic III: The Isles of Terra

TERRA-FYING EXPERIENCES

As games steadily improve over the years, they become more and more complex, and therefore harder to solve. **Might and Magic III**, from New World Computing, is the newest instalment in the Might and Magic series. Several puzzles are scattered throughout the game, and character development is an essential part of it.

Here I intend to list a few helpful hints to get beginning, intermediate, and the more advanced adventures on the right track.

Creative thoughts

When creating a party, keep in mind that there are three magic classes – sorcerer, druid, and cleric – and that spells will become available to the druid that can not be used by the sorcerer or the cleric.

When equipping a party of adventurers, most of the other towns offer better supplies than the armourer in Fountain Head. It is usually best to get as many characters in the party holding a bow of some kind. A regular weapon can be readied along with a bow, which is very helpful.

Ranged weapons will help wear down adversaries before close combat can occur. Also, using the keyboard to shoot arrows at enemies, will sometimes let the party get two shots for every turn taken by an adversary.

A beginning party starting in Fountain Head will find it easier to fight the monsters outside Fountain Head instead of the giant rats that reside inside the city. Exploration of the dungeon under Fountain Head should reveal some very nice bonuses for the beginning adventurer. Access to Castle Whiteshield will be granted once Fountain Head has been saved.

Be sure to search the fountains within the town. There are also several fountains hidden in the countryside around Fountain Head. These hidden fountains grant many magical bonuses to those adventurers that drink from their waters.

Pyramid power

Once Fountain Head has been conquered and Whiteshield explored, a special key can be found at the top of Mount Keystone.

This key will allow access to the various pyramids that populate the landscape. Inside the pyramids lie the answers to many of the riddles that are found while travelling within the Isles of Terra.

King Zealot, King Tumult, and King Chaotic are vying for power in the Isles. A good adventurer can collect the Ultimate Orbs of Power and render them unto each king.

Into orbit

Take care not to give too many orbs to one king before it is time, and several million experience points can be gained. Once 11 orbs have been given to one king, that king destroys the other two, and makes everyone in the party champions. A valuable gift is also given by the king.

A mirror can be found in every town. The mirrors allow teleportation throughout the land.

Each town has a special word that will allow access to it, plus some islands can also be accessed. Home, seadog, freeman, doomed, and redhot allow access to the towns. Earth, fire, air, and water lead to the various islands.

Monsters can be found throughout the isles, and if the breeding grounds of these foul beasts can be destroyed, many experience points will be awarded.

A brave – and rich adventurer – can gain mastery over every skill available in a dungeon within the Evil Eye Forest.

Good information can be found in the bars that populate each town. Try not to get too drunk. A drunk character can not attain tips, or do much else for that matter.

Donating at every temple in every town is also important. By donating enough at one temple, special bonuses will be given to the character that does so.

On OnesDay, characters must donate once. On TwosDay, characters must donate twice to get the blessings. Could this possibly be a connection? ❑

Published by
New World Computing (US)

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Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
VGA, MCGA, EGA and Tandy

Supports
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TRAINS FROM THE UNEXPECTED

Mike Woodhouse investigates the SIAM programs as part of a series that looks at programs weird and sometimes wonderful

Systems
PC and ST

Availability
43 programs available, prices from £11.95 to £23.95 depending on complexity (price includes air mail) from SIAM, 1St David's Close, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead HP3 8LU, UK. Visa and Mastercard are accepted

SIAM simulations are not your usual train games. In fact, they can only be considered 'games' in the loosest sense of the word. The programs require the player to take on the role of a station manager or another supervisory position, and operate the designated area over a full shift.

The job in essence means allocating services to sections of track in the most efficient manner, but the more complex simulations (like **Bath '61**) may also demand that the type of locomotive be specified for the task in hand.

Burlington Northern is the simplest of the three programs reviewed. The player, as manager, is placed in charge of a 65-mile section of track, much of which is single line. (For those interested, the track in question was formerly part of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, linking with the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroads.)

Traffic, normally freight but including Amtrak's Empire Builder, arrives from both ends, some fast, some stopping. The task is to set the routes for these trains so that will experience the minimum delay. Points are lost for any delays which may be incurred.

Operation is simple: each game minute takes about two seconds to tick through. The clock can be suspended at any time by hitting the space bar and entering the start and end points of the route to be allocated.

That route is then updated on the screen to show that it has been reserved, the clock then continues. And that's it! Simplicity itself, until, that is, seven or eight trains suddenly appear in the area, all with their own requirements.

Leeds 1989

This program continues in a similar vein, but here the player takes on the role of station manager, responsible for directing incoming services to platforms in Leeds station from such diverse places as Harrogate, Skipton, Normanton and the like.

What comes in must go out so apart from specifying which trains are ready to leave, the play must also decide *when* they are ready to leave, always bearing in mind that until a train has passed a junction, that junction is 'reserved' and may not be allocated to another train. Crashes are not possible.

Bath 1961

This is a horror story. Like Leeds, incoming and outgoing traffic must be managed, but in addition the engine sheds must be managed. This involves refuelling and turning the engines, as well as allocating engines to rolling stock – this is made even harder by the need to give each train a specific kind of engine. We are starting to talk major stress here.

None of these programs is exactly riveting graphically: the displays of track are character-based. Some of the screen info takes a while to get used to. Once understood the graphics are acceptable.

The bulk of the effort behind this simulation seems to have gone into the programming itself. Instructions on operating the program are sparse (although the description of the task in railway terms is sufficient).

The games are a little dry – there are no zaps, splats, or what-have-you – but the once the idea has sunk in they are hypnotic, very much in the way as the air traffic control simulations are. Each simulation can take three to four hours to complete, and can be saved if required.

SIAM stands for structured information analysis methods, which goes some way towards explaining the approach taken. The games are not overpriced and there's a good selection to choose from. Try one and you may end up sympathising with station manager the next time you hear 'British Rail/Amtrak apologises...' ❑

DESIGN SOFTWARE: More Than A Game. . .

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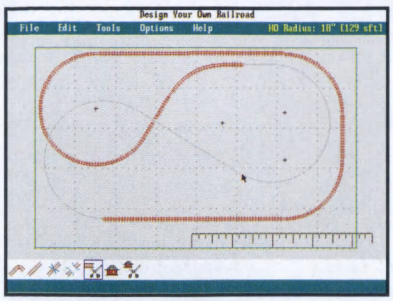
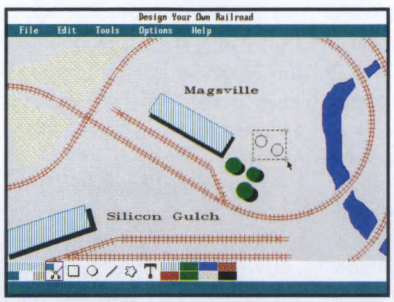
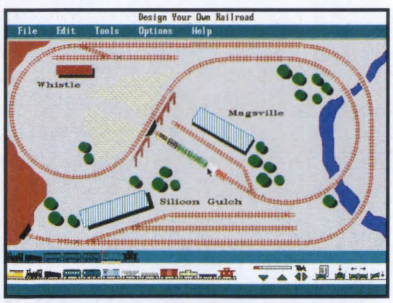


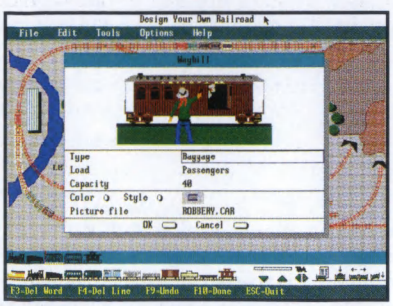
DESIGN! Sketch a track plan! Unique track-laying tools are specially designed to keep curves aligned and precise.



BUILD! Create a colorful setting! Draw buildings, trees, rivers, roads, bridges, circus tents- A complete set of drawing tools is included.



RUN! Make up a train and drive it down the track! Operate track switches. Each train has its own controls. But be alert! A crash leaves wreckage scattered everywhere!



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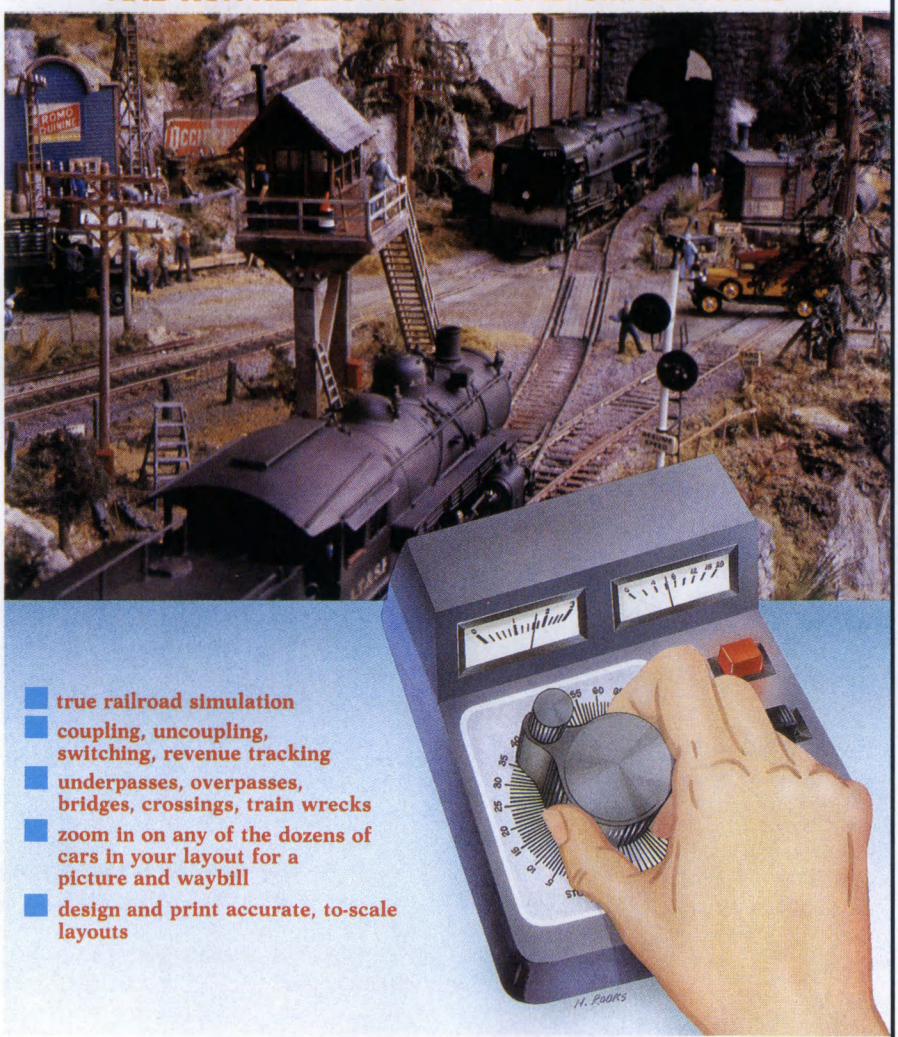

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Harpoon plugs into Electronic Arts

ELECTRONIC Arts has taken over the distribution of **Harpoon** from Mirrorsoft. One of EA's first acts will be to release the 1.21 version of the game along with all the Battlesets.

The master program will be released in the UK in November in a new pack that will contain Battlesets 1 and 2.

The scenario editor and Battleset 3 will be released in December with Battleset 4 appearing in January. Battleset 5, which will be entitled **The Pacific Rim**, should hit the shelves in February.

The **Challenger Pack**, which will be restricted to the US, will comprise the master program, the North Atlantic Battleset; the scenario editor and the *Harpoon Battlebook* (reviewed last issue).

UK users with modems may be interested to learn that the Harpoon Scenario Warehouse BBS now has UK branch. To access this call 0689 824666 – the BBS supports modems up to 2400 baud, 8 bit, 0 parity, 1 stop bit. There is no on-line charge for this service. The Warehouse is an ideal place to upload or download scenarios and chat with other **Harpoon** users. US readers wishing to access the Warehouse should dial 011 44 689 824666.

Three-Sixty has taken over what was to be **Cherbourg: The Battle of Utah Beach** from Interstel. The new title will be **V for Victory** with the aforementioned Cherbourg forming the first in a planned series of Second World War battlesets.

The modern warfare land-based game **Patriot** has now slipped to an April 1992 release. In the interim Three-Sixty will be releasing **ABC 1992 Winter Sports Games**. This is a simulation of the Winter Olympics and features events such as the bobsled, luge, downhill, biathlon, and slalom.

Another Three-Sixty release is **Theatre of War** – an intriguing abstract wargame game that looks like nothing seen before. The 'board' is a 3D polygon environment modified with terrain, texture, obstacles and elevations. The time period spans the feudal era to present day with weaponry from each period being available. The battlefield may be strategically changed as the game progresses, and a terrain generator is included with the basic package.

Three-Sixty will be publishing Theatre Sets to support the basic program. **Theatre of War** will be released in December for the PC with the Amiga version to follow in the new year.

More scope for Snipers

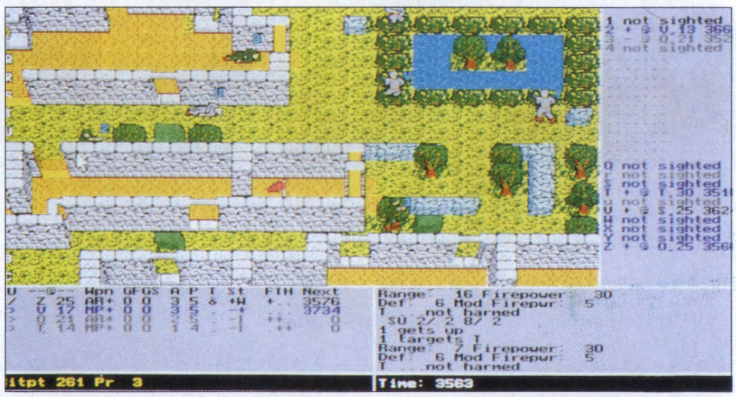
COMPUSERVE has announced the release of a new colour graphics interface for its multi-user online game **Sniper**.

The game is set on the Western Front during the Second World War. Different missions and scenarios provide varying goals, rules and obstacles.

The challenge of the game is in controlling simultaneous movements of several soldiers pitted against enemy soldiers who will move and react.

Called Scope, the new interface contains three-dimensional mapping facilities that help give a realistic feel to the battlefield. Hedges, trees, and buildings are now depicted in full colour.

System requirements to play the game are a PC with EGA (minimum) graphics and a Hayes compatible modem. For more information US contact 800 848 8199 (US), or 0800 289 378 (UK).



In sight: new interface for Sniper on Compuserve

THE CONVERTED

Hard Nova (Electronic Arts), for the ST

The Immortal (Electronic Arts), for the PC (EGA, Roland and Adlib supported), ST version reviewed issue 2

Starflight 2 (Electronic Arts), for the Amiga and ST

Lone Wolf (Audiogenic), for the PC

Killing Cloud (Mirrorsoft), for the PC

Ultima 6 (Mindscape), for the ST and Amiga

Wolfpack (Mirrorsoft), for the ST

PGA is on course

TIRED of whacking the ball around Sterling Shores? If the answer is yes then you'll be delighted to hear that Electronic Arts has come up with three new courses for **PGA Golf**.

Due out next month the course disk will contain simulations of the links at Scottsdale, Eagletrace, and Southwood.

A rangefinder will be also be included. This will provide a measure of the distance from ball to cursor.

Fans of **John Madden Football** will be pleased to hear that **John Madden II** is on the way. They may be less pleased to learn that the only noticeable difference is enhanced graphics.

Errata

THE following information was omitted from issue 12. **Armour Alley** is published by Three-Sixty Pacific and distributed in the UK by Electronic Arts. **Gateway to the Savage Frontier** is published by SSI and distributed in the UK by US Gold. Available for the PC and Amiga. Supports 256-colour VGA and Adlib sound card.

Mansell gets the Gremlins

SO YOU thought Nigel Mansell was going to sign for Williams again? Or McLaren, perhaps. Wrong. He's signed for Gremlin!

This Sheffield-based computer games company has secured the world rights to produce a Formula 1 game based on the exploits of 'Nige' and his famous fist.

Like a new Williams gearbox (though hopefully more successful) the exact details of the game are being 'kept under wraps' (that is, Gremlin has no idea).

For those who prefer to crash in a 4 Wheel Drive, Gremlin has a compilation based on such vehicles. **Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge**, **Team Suzuki**, **Toyota Celica GT4 Rally**, **Combo Racer** comprise **4 Wheel Drive** which will be available for the ST and Amiga.

Wintry views of Impressionism

STRATEGY specialist Impressions has announced its new line-up for the winter. **Fighter Command** should warm the cockles of your hearts as this is a strategic air combat simulator set in the Middle East.

There is no joystick waggling or mind numbing keystroke overlays here. Ground resource management is the key to keeping the planes in good nick, as well as maintaining the supply lines.

If you're sick to death of the Middle East (and who isn't?) then Impressions will be releasing a Second World War scenario disk to coincide with the season of goodwill, peace on earth, and all that. All together there are 20 missions and enough weaponry to make an arms dealer feel like it's, er, Christmas. The disk will be available for the ST and Amiga in November, and the PC in December.

Moving from the Middle East to the middle west, we reach the unfortunately named Fort Dix. Fort Dix is an outpost of **Fort Apache,** from which this game takes its name.

This is the residence of the seventh cavalry, so *Dances With Wolves* this game ain't. In fairness the player's task is not to exterminate the Indians, but to keep the peace. Threatening this worthy notion are banditos, striking gold miners, and plain old tea leaves (thieves, for the benefit of US readers). The game uses the miniatures-based system that Impressions used in **Cohort** and **Charge of the Light Brigade**.

By way of a diversion Impressions is also releasing an adventure game called **The Hand of St James**.

The plot sounds vaguely reminiscent of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*: someone at the monastery has wasted a monk and the player must find out who in God's name did it. Not only was the monk offed but someone has thieved the priceless relic, the eponymous Hand of St James. There are lots of locations to explore, people to meet, role-playing, sword fighting and debauchery.

Stealth club reveals HQ

FANS of Microprose's **F19 Stealth Fighter** may be interested to know of The Headquarters Special Observation Group.

The club is the brainchild of former fighter pilot Raphael Setchiel Rodgers who formed the club so that fans of the game have a meeting point to discuss their experiences.

Certificates and badges will be awarded to those who can prove their valour in combat.

For more information contact: Headquarters Special Observation Group, 7/11 Kensington High Street, London W8 5NP, UK.

Unix users get Stones

UNIX, the computer system for rocket scientists, has not hitherto, had much of a connection with The Rolling Stones, and this story is not about to change that.

But it's perhaps worth mentioning that **Ishido: The *Way* of the Stones** is being ported to the UNIX/X-Windows platform by the (hallo) Dux Software Corporation.

Dux will also be transporting the classic **Sim City** to a similar destination. Look's like there'll be satisfaction all round then.

Miss Whiplash and Windows

MS LINDI St Clair, otherwise known as Miss Whiplash, has announced that the Corrective Party, of which she is the big cheese (Danish Blue?), will field enough candidates at the UK's next general election to qualify for a party political broadcast slot on television.

The noted film director Ken Russell (*Crimes of Passion* and *Whore* being notable in his ouvre) has agreed to direct the video.

Britain's 256-grey scale prime minister John Major was unavailable for comment. There are no plans to make a licensed computer game of the broadcast, or indeed of the election itself. Nor will there will be a Windows 3.0 version *(so what is this story doing in the mag? – Ed).*

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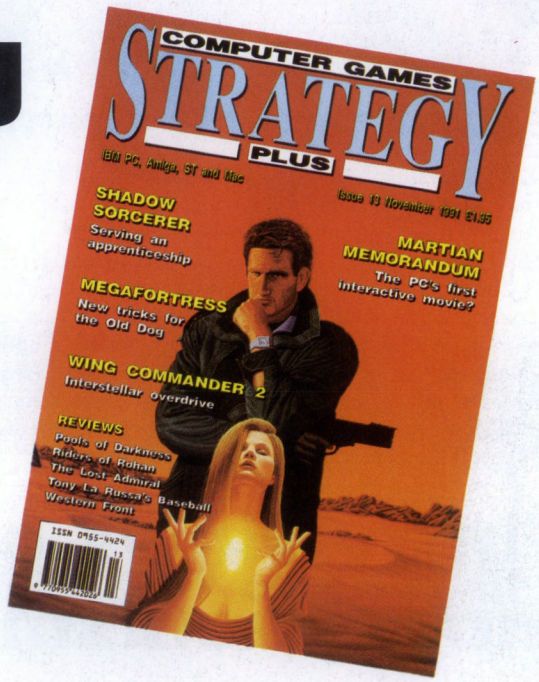

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NFL Pro League Football

Heads up

By Richard Lawrence

NFL Pro League Football is a statistical based strategy football simulation. There won't be any breaking of thumbnails in the heat of action with this game, unless out of frustration over the play just called.

The emphasis is entirely on play selection as a coach and not on execution as a player, and the graphics, while good, don't require gobs of disk space and a high-end processor to appreciate.

The manual is brief and easy to read – indeed, too brief. Although I am all for short manuals (because I usually don't read them), this is too much of a good thing. I found myself confused on more than one issue.

Included in this package are two play cards, one for passing plays and one for running. Each is double sided, with one side being offence and the other defence. A word of advice: take these cards immediately and photocopy them, because it will save time to have a single offence sheet and a single defence sheet. Although the cards included with the game are laminated and sturdy, they will inevitably be damaged if used alone.

On the cards

Here again is an example of poor packaging; the cards have 50 plays on each side, printed in five columns – but in tiny lettering. They can be difficult to read at times, so it is a good idea to enlarge them when making the copies. There is a small section at the bottom of each card that depicts about 10 plays; if there had been an entire playbook of these diagrams for each play then my other qualms about the materials would be laid to rest, but as it stands now the player must use the numerical encoding system **MSFL,** as it is commonly called, provides.

There are actually five programs in **MSFL:** NFL Pro League Football, NFL Head-Up Football, General Manager, League Leaders, and Stats Keeper.

The two primary modules are Pro League and Head-Up, so we'll tackle those first starting with NFL Pro League – a unique and highly enjoyable feature of **MSFL**.

In essence, Pro League is an entirely strategic approach to football, and is the module that Micro Sports previously sold as the complete game. Before play commences, the gamer as a coach creates a game plan based on the strengths and weaknesses of his team, and how it measures up against an opponent.

This is accomplished by entering a series of numbers that determine what the team will do in a given situation. For instance, the first selections made under defence tell the team whether to play the run or pass based on the down/yards to go. If it is 1st and greater than 10, the opponent will almost never run, so in the play the run column under 1st and 10, the player would enter a very low percentage, say 5%. The computer then keeps track of what the defence has done on every 1st and greater than 10 situation for the opponent's offence; and it will call a run formation 5% of the time.

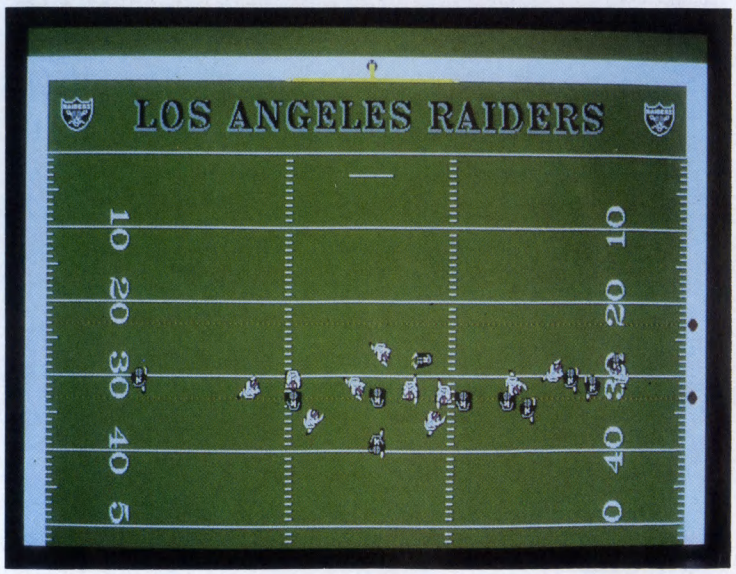
But 1st and less than 10 will usually result in a running play, so a high percentage here will ensure the defence will concentrate on the run.

The defence can be further refined by telling the computer what percentage of the time to run a 4–3 line formation versus the 3–4, or which back to key on (the player most likely to have the ball, and thus the one the defence should concentrate on). There is an entire page of options to set – far too many to list here.

Offence is much the same as defence, except this page determines the percentage of plays that will be runs instead of passes and who will carry the ball or receive it, and so on.

Lastly, there is a page dedicated to what half-time adjustments are made and how they are decided. For example, if the team is winning by 14 points at half-time and had called a primarily passing offence for the first half, it may be time to modify play selection to mostly runs the second half, in the interest of preserving the lead and running out the clock. On the other hand, if loosing by 14 it may be time to gamble more on defence (set pursuit to fast) and to begin passing more often on first down.

After the game plans are finished they can be saved or simply kept in



Published by
Micro Sports Inc

Distributed by
Interplay; available in the UK as import only

Designed by
Dave Holt

Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
EGA

Supports
No sound support; modem option

Players
1–2

Notes
Richard Lawrence is a Redskins fan

memory for the current game. Two players can play at once by adjusting their teams' individual screens before play, or the saved game plans can be exchanged using the special replay option that guarantees games on different computers will play exactly the same. The actual game continues automatically and can be viewed in two ways, either through a fast side view where the field position is represented by a football on the field that moves back and forth as play progresses, or using a traditional Xs and Os overhead view of each play. Play commentary is presented in either method, showing text summaries of who is making which plays.

The other game play module, NFL Head-Up Football, is more along the lines of a traditional tactical approach to a computer football game, similar to XOR's **NFL Challenge** in implementation, and is the new feature added to **MSFL** with the 1991 release. Each player is a coach of a selected team and will make the play call for every play in the game, but doesn't have anything to do with the actual execution – just like real NFL coaches.

Remote link

The opponent can either be the computer (which plays a strong game based on the game plans it supplies by default in the NFL Pro League module) or a human opponent who can either be at the keyboard or hooked up remotely via modem, one of the best features of the package.

Teams are shown as actual helmeted, uniform-clad (both home and away colours) players on the screen, viewed from above.

Play calling is accomplished by two-number abbreviations supplied on the play cards, with about 200 total plays.

Unfortunately, no provision is made for designing plays, nor are any trick plays included, so don't expect to surprise opponents with a fake punt. I was disappointed that the counter trey, a favourite play of my home team, the Washington Redskins, was not included, as it has become popular throughout the NFL in the past few years.

Play selection was complete enough that a similar play is listed, but fans of the run and shoot offenses played so well by Houston and Detroit may have trouble finding equivalents on the pre-generated play list. Penalties are included but are assessed without explanation. There are no injuries or player substitutions.

As an example of the play encoding system, the offensive play number 05 is described as '25 HB C Trap'. The 2 stands for the runner (the halfback), 5 is the offensive lane he will run to (interestingly, **MSFL** has them reversed from the way I learned them), C stands for the counter move, and trap is the type of blocking.

The best defence against this would probably be number 06 on the defence card, '42 Spread A Short 1', meaning the strength of the line will be to the left (4), pursuit will be medium, the line will spread out, key on the halfback (letter A), expect a short, quick developing play, and the last number 1 stands for tight coverage.

If this seems a might confusing, well, it is. After quite some time it does get easier, with most players building a specific set of plays they remember and use regularly, but I must reiterate that a play book would be highly desirable. Other players of the game I spoke to were typing out their own playbooks in lieu of an official one.

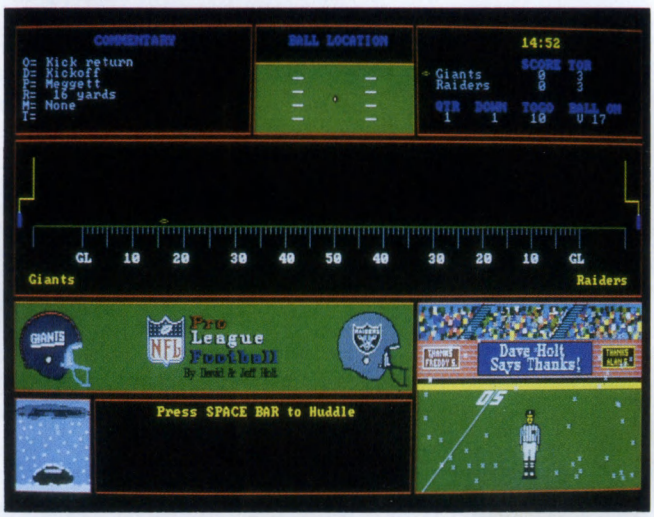
After the play is called, the computer shows the execution of it on the screen. The animation is useful for visualizing the play and understanding what went right or wrong, and does add interest over the standard Xs and Os scheme. It could use some work, because it comes up short of the fluidity of the real thing. For instance, after a running play the defensive player that made the tackle often simply disappears from an area a yard or two away and then reappears on top of the runner, making the tackle, instead of tracking the ball carrier from the beginning of the play and making the tackle. Still, the point of the game is not to be a graphics powerhouse, and what is shown is more than enough to be highly enjoyable.

Keeping track

After either a Pro League or Head-Up game is finished, the supplied Stat Module can be used to compile complete statistics on the teams involved. It will automatically keep track of all standard stats such as sacks, interceptions, yards gained, first downs and so on as well as providing individual offensive drive summaries. This is an excellent complement to the play modules.

The Stat Module can keep track of an entire season of computer generated games played by a league created in the General Manager module, using any mixture of past or present teams. This becomes great fun when several players get together to play various teams in a computer created league, because it supplies accurate records (even printed copy) of how and why one team beat another. There is even a League Leader module that will reveal outstanding players in a computer league.

The final module, General Manager, allows the player to be a scout with various teams around the league,



either real ones from statistical data, or ones created in a computer league. There is an option to call and download various years of NFL teams, including the latest games (all NFL teams for 1986 through 1990 are included with the game). Downloading naturally costs extra money, and there is no way manually to enter statistical data to describe a team. I would have liked to have this option, because anybody with an NFL encyclopedia could then enter any team from the past 30 years of the NFL.

In general, I found **MSFL** fitted the bill as a thinking man's football simulation. It has a few drawbacks, most notably the poor documentation and support materials (no playbook), and the inability to design personal plays or enter team stats from NFL records.

But it's loads of fun in head-to-head competition, has a solid computer opponent, and the statistics management for computer-played games is the most complete example I've seen so far. ❑

Playmaker Football

The generation game

By John Harrington

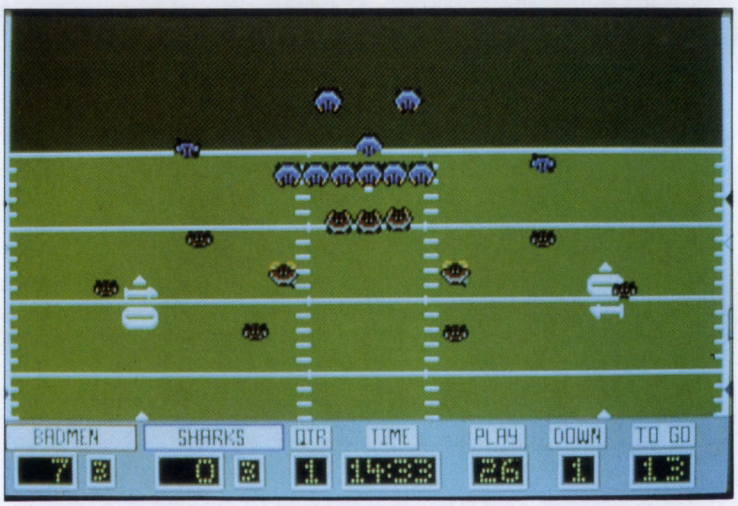
It must be getting mighty cramped in the sports locker with all these new gridiron games hitting the streets. Perhaps 'new' is something of a misnomer when applied to **Playmaker Football**, because the game has been around on the Mac for a couple of years, but until now has been unavailable on the PC.

The game offers three levels of play, two of which are strategic and one of which is arcade. The arcade element merely entails using the mouse or joystick to control the active player on the football field. Unfortunately, the animation is so jerky it is as if the playing field were bathed in stroboscopic light. No one but an epileptic arcade freak could seriously enjoy this aspect of the game.

Filling the screen with lines and symbols representing how the play should work is easy; designing the plays so they actually work is considerably harder and will probably appeal only to the hard core armchair coach. Thankfully a number of play books are provided on disk and these may be modified using the chalkboard editor.

The team draft, as it is misleadingly called, is actually a character generation system that will be familiar to role-players everywhere.

A number of skill points are allocated among the squad of 30 players, with each player rated for Speed, Strength, Agility, Intelligence and Discipline. I have yet to win a game with any of the teams I have drafted while I have not yet lost against the computer when controlling one of the pre-designed teams on the team disk.



Maybe the computer generated teams have been designed using a higher skill points allocation or maybe I have yet to devise a play book that makes best use of my personnel. Come back in a year's time when I've finished my fine tuning and I will give a definitive opinion.

The two strategic levels, however, offer the scope for massive involvement whether it be in the role of coach or general manager.

Chalkboard play-design facilities are quite old hat now but this game's chalkboard editor has a friendlier interface than most. It works on a similar basis to the typical art package, with a number of icons representing actions such as hand-offs, pump fakes, blocks and so on.

As stated previously, the game comes complete with a number of teams already designed. Lest there be any doubt, let me say that these are not based on real NFL teams – not unless there is an NFL team called the Porkers featuring a host of players whose names are dreadful puns such as Rasher O'Bacon.

Each team has its own strengths and weaknesses and its own play book. The personnel and the play book can be modified, as can the artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms used by the computer to call each play. The AI uses a number of settings based on the down, yards to first down, position on the pitch, time remaining, the score and the pre-match priority assigned to the play. The priority level is adjusted automatically during the course of the match depending on its success.

The computer plays a largely predictable game but knowing what the opposition is going to do and being able to counter it are two different things. Occasionally the pre-defined AI settings lead to dumb calls, such as going for a field goal on the last play of the game when trailing by six points.

Designing a perfect game plan, however, takes as much patience, if not more, than the designing of the play book or the drafting of the teams and would probably be attempted only by players participating in a postal league. The head-to-head two-player version is a more instinctive affair, although game statistics are automatically compiled should either player wish to analyze their opponent's tendencies. The bird's-eye view of a load of helmets running about a football field may not be gobsmacking graphically but it does make it easy to see what is going on.

My reservations about this game are mostly minor. The comprehensive stats promised in the rules turned out to be only on a team level rather than on an individual level.

The major defect is the jerky scrolling which completely snafus the arcade game, but even if the animation had been smoother the game would still have been a poor second to Bethesda's **Gridiron** in this respect.

The strategic game is in a different bag altogether, and although unlikely to appeal to the 'replay gamer' interested only in controlling real NFL teams, it makes **Playmaker Football** definitely one for anyone interested in the tactical side of the sport. ❑

Designed by
Brian Brinkman

Published by
Brøderbund

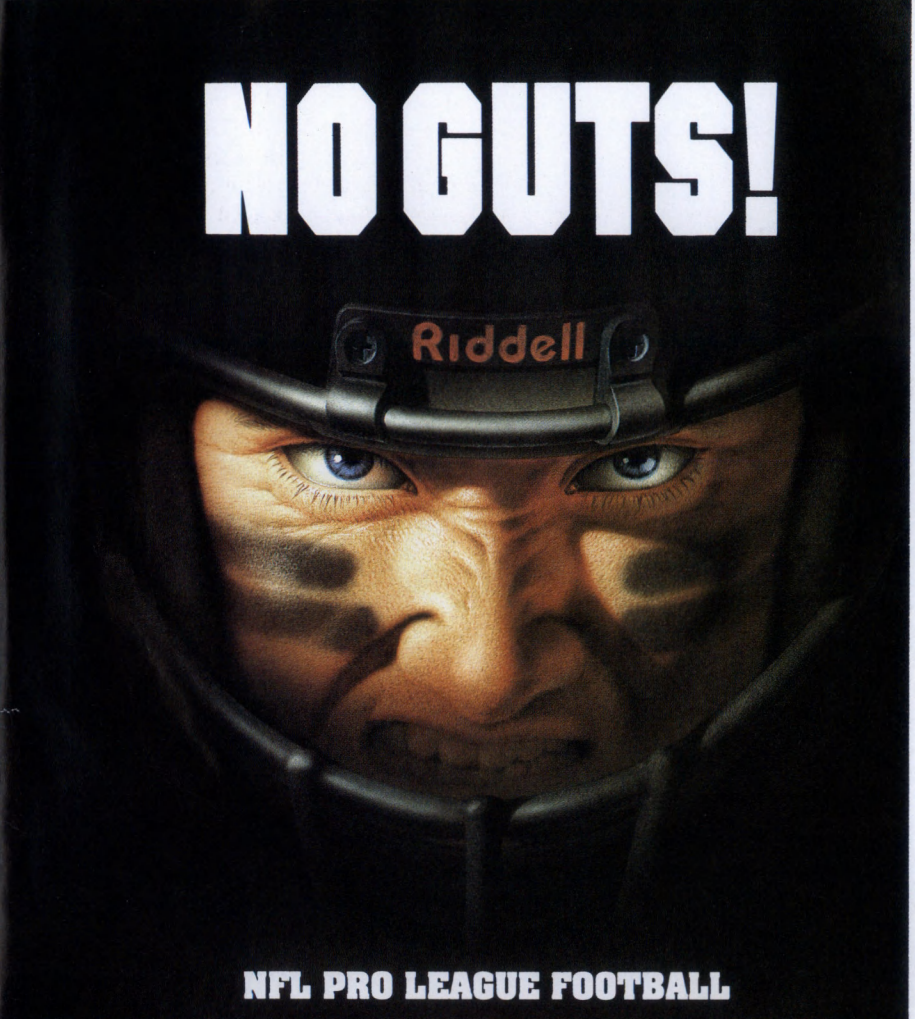
Systems
Mac (1Mb), IBM PC

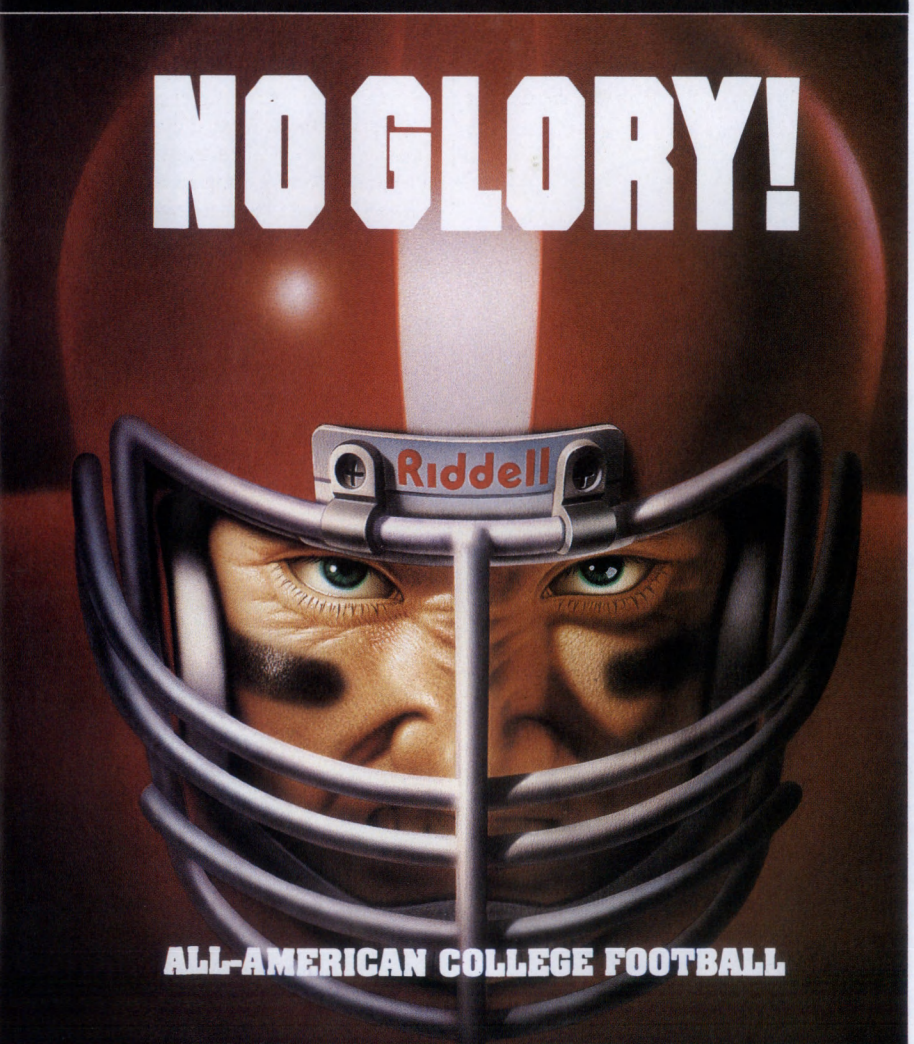
PC graphics
VGA, MCGA, EGA, Tandy, CGA, Hercules

Supports
Adlib, Sound Blaster, Roland MT-32 sound cards; mouse and keyboard

Number of players
1–2

Notes
Supports laser printers, but there is a bug. Brøderbund says users should configure printers to print in horizontal mode





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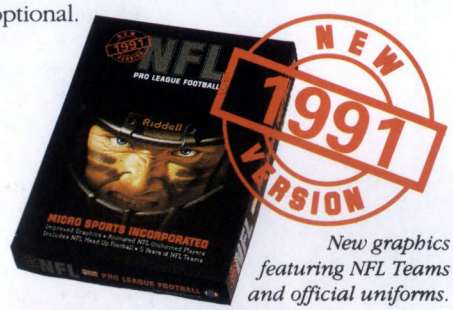

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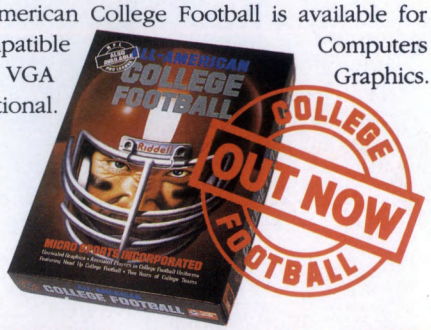

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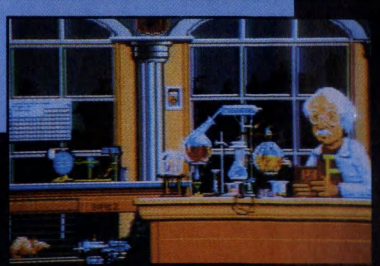

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Micro League Football

Version 1.5 Deluxe Edition – The Coach's Challenge

By Steven Wartofsky

American football is a complex sport that lends itself quite well to a strategic and statistics-oriented simulation on computer. Whole hosts of plays are provided in good recent designs, and extensive databases attempt to provide historically accurate renditions of player performance. Players, managers, teams, and leagues are each represented as fully as possible in the system, and ideally the interaction between all elements is relatively seamless.

Micro League Football: The Coach's Challenge serves as an excellent introduction to this genre of computer gaming. One of the most crucial elements in successful football strategy is the creation of an effective play book for the team, and **MLF** provides an extensive play book editor for defensive and offensive plays (a default play book is provided to get the new player started without too much fuss). Any kind of play book can be designed and saved easily to disk.

Leagues can be created from scratch, and the number of teams that comprise a league is up to the player, within certain constraints (there can be one division with 30 teams, or two divisions with 15 teams, or six divisions with five teams each). Teams for a created league can be copied out of the provided teams (the 1990 National Football League teams are included).

Once created, a league can be edited and customized.

Extensive print options provide the means to print out information at any level of the design, a facility which is extremely useful for reference during play.

AI say!

After setting up, teams can be selected to play out a particular game. Options include coach AI (easy, average, tough, human player), quarter length, set overtime, set weather, set menu type, and set game type.

Weather can be normal, rainy, or cold, windy and rainy; menus can be graphics-based, play book-style or expert (for fastest play); and games can be normal or quick exhibition or league play, depending on the player's preference.

Game play involves simply selecting from the play book, and responding to events as they transpire. Like most stats sports games, play is all turn-based. The two-thirds overhead representation of the players on the field is less informative than a more simplistic but direct straight overhead Xs and Os representation would be, but gets the general idea across.

If playing out a particular game is not the focus, league play can be invoked, and the entire league can be played out on a weekly basis. Finally, the entire league's season can be initiated at the click of the mouse, and on a fast computer takes amazingly little time to complete, considering the extensive detail of the statistical modelling. Print-outs of the compiled season stats can be quickly obtained.

Rateable value

The player ratings in **Micro League Football** sound as complex as anything else out there. Ratings are differential, based on context during each play. Position, opponent, play and team mix are all taken into account with each play affecting the ratings of each player on the team.

Finally, the deluxe edition includes the General Manager, which does for players what the league editor does for teams. Each player's stats can be edited in fine detail; there are 62 different player stats to be accounted for in all. Team stats can be controlled with the manager as well.

This kind of editing allows the user to design his own teams and players, based on the most recent available statistics. Players can also be traded between teams via simple menu choices in the General Manager utility.

Micro League Football is controlled easily with a mouse, will print out to laser printers as well as a dot matrix, and takes up a puny 700k of disk space. And its EGA graphics are perfectly crisp for the needs of the game.

I'm not one who lives or dies based on the statistical accuracies of a particular sports simulation, so I can't really comment intelligently on the 'realism' of **Micro League Football**.

Although I wouldn't bet a career in professional sports on any of these things, **Micro League Football** seems solid enough to make predictions for the office pool. ❑

Designed by
Jim Nangano, Ed Daniels and George Karalias

Published by
Micro League Sports Association

Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
CGA, EGA

Supports
Keyboard, mouse, printer (including laser); Adlib sound board

Number of players
1–2

STRATEGY PLUS

INTERNATIONAL READER AWARDS

Strategy Plus writers, whadda they know? By the end of the year they're brain dead anyway. So what better time to let the readers have their say than now? This is *your* chance to decide what *you* consider the best games of 1991 to be. To make your lives easier (and ours) we've provided a list of contenders. These are drawn from the pages of *Strategy Plus* issues 4 to 13 and have been condensed into games that are *new* rather than re-releases. Enter the number of the game you wish to vote for in the appropriate box on the form below; you may vote for one game in each category. Then vote for the best overall game by including the number of any game from any category in the appropriate box. Photocopied entry forms are OK.

Strategy

1 Jones in the Fast Lane
2 Moonbase
3 Railroad Empire
4 Stratego
5 The Final Conflict
6 Powermonger
7 Carthage
8 Lightspeed
9 Battletech 2
10 Warlords
11 Elite Plus
12 Shanghai II
13 Betrayal
14 Escape from Colditz
15 Nobunaga's Ambition II
16 Feudal Lords
17 Worlds at War
18 Merchant Colony
19 Lexi-Cross
20 Go
21 Medieval Lords
22 Wing Commander 2
23 Armour-geddon
24 Castles
25 Midwinter II
26 Cardinal of the Kremlin
27 Charge of the Light Brigade
28 Rules of Engagement
29 Armada 2525
30 Sarakon
31 Robosport
32 Armour Alley
33 The Perfect General
34 The Lost Admiral
35 Mega lo Mania
36 Germ Crazy
37 Champion of the Raj
38 Riders of Rohan
39 Rorke's Drift

Wargames

40 UMS II
41 'Nam
42 Command HQ
43 Cohort
44 Gettysburg
45 Afrika Corps
46 Pacific Storm
47 Brigade Commander
48 Conflict: Middle East
49 Napoleon I
50 Western Front

Adventure

51 Cadaver
52 Altered Destiny
53 Prince of Persia
54 Elvira
55 Savage Empire
56 Spirit of Excalibur
57 Lord of the Rings
58 Rise of the Dragon
59 Countdown
60 King's Quest V
61 Spellcasting 101
62 BAT
63 Space Quest IV
64 The Killing Cloud
65 Chaos in Andromeda
66 Murders in Space
67 Demoniak
68 Heart of China
69 Timequest
70 Cruise for a Corpse
71 The Adventures of Robin Hood
72 Martian Memorandum

Role-playing games

73 Space 1889
74 Fountain of Dreams
75 Tunnels and Trolls
76 Death Knights of Krynn
77 Eye of the Beholder
78 Megatraveller I
79 Might and Magic III
80 Megatraveller 2
81 Gateway to the Savage Frontier
82 Pools of Darkness
83 Shadow Sorcerer
84 Martian Dreams
85 Bard's Tale III
86 Quest for Glory II
87 Bane of the Cosmic Forge

Sports

88 Links
89 4D Sports Boxing
90 Micro League Football – The Coach's Challenge
91 Micro League Baseball – The Manager's Challenge
92 Wayne Gretzky 2
93 Pro Tennis Tour 2
94 Monday Night Football
95 Tournament Golf
96 Joe Montana Football
97 International Ice Hockey
98 I Play 3D Football
99 European Soccerleague
100 Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge
101 Manchester United Europe
102 RBI2 Baseball
103 Cricket
104 Robin Smith's International Cricket
105 Challenge Golf
106 The Dream Team
107 Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball
108 MUDS

Simulations

109 Knights of the Sky
110 Das Boot
111 Red Baron
112 Sim Earth
113 MiG 29
114 F-29 Retaliator
115 Life and Death II
116 Jetfighter II
117 3D Construction Kit
118 Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
119 Flight Assignment: Airline Transport Pilot
120 Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe
121 F-14 Tomcat
122 Thunderhawk
123 Gunship 2000
124 Megafortress
125 F-117A
126 Blue Max

Category		Category	
Strategy		Role-playing	
Wargames		Sports	
Adventure		Simulations	
Best overall game (any category)			

Name

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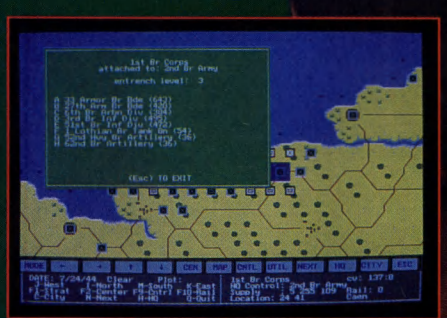
IBM EGA DISPLAY



Allied player reviews units that make up the 1ST British Corps. More pop-up menus are available to show even greater detail.

IBM EGA DISPLAY

Allied armies are poised to break out from Normandy.

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The Gold Sheet

Pro Football Analyst

By Richard Jacobs

Betting on pro football games has always been a thorn in the side of the National Football League (NFL). While the league publicly makes every effort to dissociate itself from gambling, it knows full well that a great deal of its popularity is because of to Joe Fan's fascination with weekly wagering. Consider that until recent pressure to discontinue the practice was exerted by the NFL, meanwhile the major TV networks provided expert analysis from professional oddsmakers in their pre-game reports.

Of course, having no vices myself, I can't condone gambling. But I recognize that many people insist on playing a football sheet every Sunday.

For such people, I have two pieces of advice: gamble only in areas of the world where it is legal, and maximize the odds of winning.

Better chances

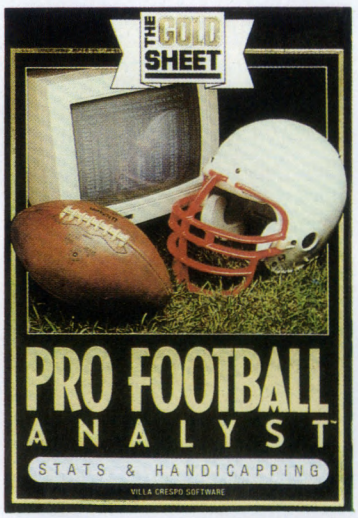
I can't help with the first piece of advice, but **The Gold Sheet Pro Football Analyst** by Villa Crespo Software might help with the second. **The Gold Sheet**, quite simply, is a handicapper built on a huge database of pro football facts, figures and information, all of which is designed to increase a prospective better's chance of picking a winner.

As a pro football database, **Gold Sheet** has no peer. The program comes with the stats for every regular season game during the last two NFL seasons (1989 and 1990). An add-on disk can be bought separately for stats back to 1983.

Thousands of stats for every NFL team are tracked in over 60 categories while trends may be called up and analyzed. The program also provides the 1991 season schedule which automatically lists the weekly games, favourites, and point spreads. The ability to update stats using a modem, the post, or manually, keeps the software constantly current.

What stats are kept? All of the standard box score stats, plus odd but potentially significant ones such as: points per 100 yards, sack yards, penalties, and average time of possession. Even more interesting is **Gold Sheet**'s trend analyst. The user can view how a team performed as the home favourite for the past two years, how it did on Monday nights, or how it did 'against the spread' with a week by week listing.

Conversely, a team's records on the road or as underdog can also be viewed. The combinations are nearly overwhelming. Want to know how the Steelers did on Monday nights in domed parks following a loss? Or how the 49ers fared in non-conference games on the road on natural grass? You get the idea.



But the heart of this software is what it does with all of those numbers. **Gold Sheet** predicts games, certainly. But it doesn't do it with some secret, random or rigid formula. Rather, **Gold Sheet** provides the user with a choice of three prediction formulas to use when handicapping games. The ability to dissect and view these formulas helps the punter decide which to select. The prediction formulas are determined by considering a number of statistics (usually more than two dozen) and assigning different weighted values to each.

Fumble factor

In one formula, for example, fumble recoveries might be heavily weighted. In another, they might be considered a minimal factor. The success of the formulas over the current year can be tracked. If one in particular has worked well, stick with it. **Gold Sheet** contains the option of editing the existing formulas or creating your own handicapping equation. This especially useful for those who don't like pre designed formulas. Do what feels right. After all, it's your money.

The data produced by the prediction formula may then be used to pick a favourite in a variety of betting formats, including straight winner, against the point spread, and over/under.

Of course, any football gambler knows that a line on a game is a flexible thing. It can change from day to day. **Gold Sheet** takes that into account as well, providing for manual entry of the latest line. **Gold Sheet** will then recommend for or against your selection given that latest information. Space limitations prevent me from listing the numerous viewing options presented in this package. But flexibility is the watchword. For example, view stats by team or category, average the stats over various time periods, or examine a 'rolling average' (past three games).

Good advice

A quote from the **Gold Sheet**'s detailed manual offers some good advice. It calls the program 'a powerful tool that can help you be a winner, but it was never intended to be a substitute for common sense'.

Gold Sheet is a valuable database for a football fanatics and number crunchers.

Gamblers will find that its array of stats and trends provide 'cause for pause' before wagering. But will this software make you rich? I wouldn't bet on it. ❑

Published by
Villa Crespo

Distribution
UK import only

Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
VGA, EGA, CGA, mono

Supports
Keyboard, mouse

Notes
Databases can be updated by modem using the VCS on-line service; one year's subscription is free with the game, subsequent support costs $24.95 a season. Weekly stat updates are available each Wednesday at 6pm central standard time. Stat updates can also be obtained by mail at $24.95 a season

Earl Weaver Baseball II

Base thoughts

By Joseph McCullough

Designed by
Eddie Dombrower

Published by
Electronic Arts

Systems
IBM PC

PC graphics
EGA, MCGA

Supports
Adlib and Roland sound boards; printer

Players
1-2

Notes
1990 MLBPA player stats and manager profiles disk now available

How often does reality compare with what we expect? The truth is, most realities never can live up to our greatest expectations. Such is the case with **Earl Weaver Baseball II**. At the Summer Consumer Electronics Show, Electronic Arts (EA) generated considerable excitement when it presented its initial work on the **Weaver** upgrade. Fans of **Earl Weaver** 1.0 and 1.5 were almost giddy after hearing that their favourite baseball simulation was going to be totally revamped.

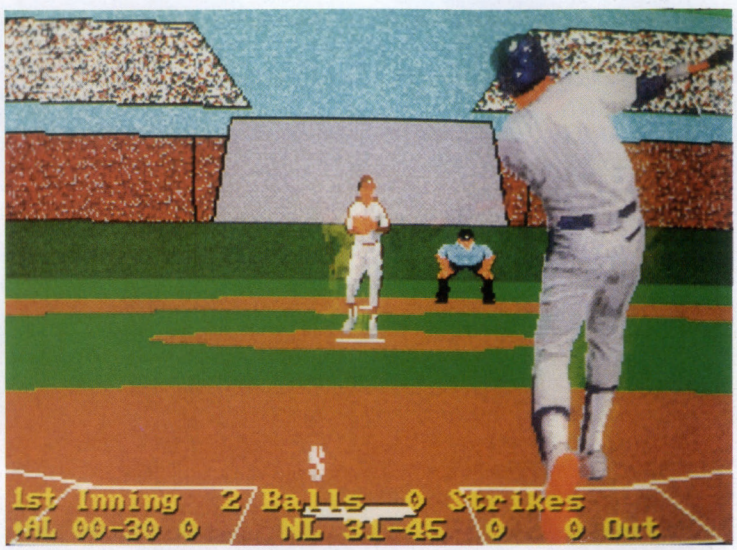
EA promised enhanced graphics and statistics, a new interface and unlimited team management abilities with the addition of the Commissioner's Disk II and what's more, it anticipated that **Earl Weaver II** would ship by late August.

In mid-October **Earl Weaver Baseball II** finally shipped, and great expectations slammed head first into reality. **Earl Weaver II** is not the revolutionary new game that EA promised. Evolutionary is a better term, but even this is debatable.

Graphics violence

The most glaring flaw in **Weaver II** is the game's unimaginative and sometimes painfully bad graphic design. The main menu screen is a prime example. In the background is a rudimentary representation of a ball park filled with what appears to be fans. Instead of people, however, the stadium's seats look as though they are covered with blue and red dots. It's almost as if a big bag of confetti exploded in the stadium.

The menu choices and other text occupy the foreground of the main menu screen. All menu fonts in **Weaver II** are white letters surrounded by coloured borders. The menu choices alone are not too hard to read. Those letters are encased in red. All other letters on the main menu, however, are surrounded by a shade of light blue that blends into the sky blue background outside the stadium. Trying to read that text is a quick path toward an eyestrain headache.



The graphics are consistently bad on all of the menus and during game play. On the team selection screen the letters' borders bleed into each other. The fonts are uneven on the team line-up and roster screens. The pop-up menus are 'textured' with multiple shades of the same colour. What could be a nice touch looks more like a programming error. During the game the fielders look more like insects than human beings. Graphics this bad have not been seen since the early 1980s.

Colouring set

Why are the graphics so poor in **Weaver II**? A lot of it has to do with the programmer's decision to use 256-colour MCGA instead of 256-colour VGA. MCGA is an enhanced version of CGA – the first colour graphics standard for IBM and compatible machines. It supports 256 colours, but does not have the resolution of VGA. As a result, on-screen fonts and sprites are drawn with large pixels, which leave the graphics looking awkward.

Bright facets

Fortunately, not all facets of the game are so poorly rendered. Particularly good is the batting screen. Unlike other baseball simulations that put the batter in a window, **Weaver II** has a full-screen batter. The strike zone is much easier to determine with a large-size batter, so batting is easier in **Weaver II** than in other simulations. A practice mode is also available to help the player polish his skills.

Graphics go hand-in-hand with animation, so does this mean that **Weaver II**'s animation is poor as well? Yes and no. Certain details of character movement are appealing. The pitcher's wind-up, although jerky on slow machines, is quite realistic. Also nice are the umpire's hand motions when calling plays. The player not only hears the call, but sees it as well.

In addition, a 'director' feature has been added to best capture all the animation.

Multiple camera angles are used within the game to bring the player close-ups of key plays. Furthermore, all six of the game's cameras can be manually adjusted. Once set, all camera positions can be saved.

Overall, though, **Weaver II**'s animation is below par. When the batter makes contact, outfielders rapidly scramble for the ball, but all this movement slows down the base-runner because the program has trouble controlling multiple on-screen sprites. Once the fielders stop moving, the base-runner speeds back up.

Console system games from the early 1980s had this problem. Sophisticated computer games in the 1990s should either be able to overcome this hardware limitation, or at least have a uniform animation rate.

Music and sound in **Earl Weaver II**, like the animation, are a mixed bag.

Overall, the music is enjoyable and adds a nice polish to the game. Two original tunes are heard on start-up and during menu selections. Organ music peppers game play, just as in real ball parks. Anyone who doesn't like the music can turn it off.

Sound is another matter entirely. Instead of supporting the Sound Blaster's DAC to port digital effects through the sound card, the game's designers force all sound effects through the PC speaker. When the umpire yells 'Strike!' it sounds like 'Uurf!' 'Foul!' sounds like 'Eech!'

Also, the sound of the bat hitting the ball is not only unrealistic, it often comes before the batter has swung the bat, adding to the confusion generated by the aforementioned graphics and animation.

Going to ground

Despite its inferior graphics and average animation and sound, **Earl Weaver II** is fundamentally strong. It's impossible to forget that this is version 2.0 of a successful game that won numerous software awards in its time. Most of what was good in **Weaver** 1.0 and 1.5 remains, and more has been added.

Earl Weaver II offers the player a full roster of options that can be set either before or during the game. The player can choose between either joystick or keyboard control and among four different difficulty levels. Also available is the choice to play and manage, manage only, or have Earl manage the selected team.

Before the game the player can choose the stadium in which to play and set the ground rules. On the ground rules menu the player can set game parameters such as the DH rule, and whether or not players can be injured.

Also included is a one-pitch mode. If this is selected, only one key pitch a batter will be simulated. The ground rules menu also includes a choice of game modes: full graphics, stats and physics mode, stats and physics game, and super-fast stat game.

Manager's choice

Not surprisingly, **Weaver II** includes a full range of managerial choices both before and during the game. Before each game the player can choose teams from the default league of 1900–30 all-stars, from leagues converted from earlier versions of **Earl Weaver Baseball**, or from the 1990 season disk (sold separately).

Once a team is selected, the player can review the full roster (including reserves) and set the line-up. Fifty statistical categories for fielders and 30 for pitchers are available to help the player make the most informed decision.

Line-ups are different depending on the pitcher being faced that day, and can be saved. And if you're having trouble deciding on a line-up, there's no problem – Earl's advice is just a keystroke away.

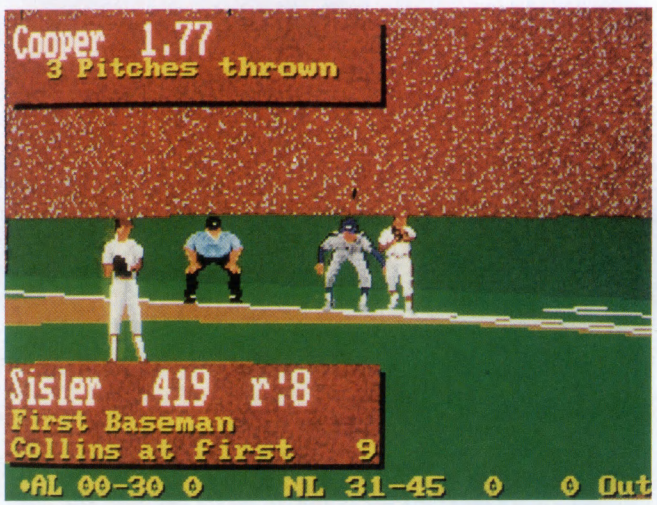
Manager choices during the game are abundant. Strategy menus, invoked by pressing the space bar, include every conceivable play: from hit and run to double stealing on the offence menu, to infield shifting and guarding lines on the defense menu. Players can also review team line-ups from the strategy menu. While viewing line-ups, player substitutions can be made.

Not on the strategy menus, but none the less available during the game, are a few key pieces of information that keep the astute manager on his toes.

Each time a batter steps up to the plate, the game displays his batting average, position and running ability, as well as the run rating of anyone on base. Also shown is the pitcher's ERA and how many pitches he has thrown thus far. Wind speed and direction can be checked by pressing the @ key.

Box scores and speed of the last pitch are also close at hand.

Finally, both Earl's advice and the advice of the actual team manager are on line during the game. After the game, box scores can be viewed, printed or saved to disk. The box score contains all statistical information about the game plus a scoring summary. Post-game stats can also be accumulated.



Missing from the package is a league set-up utility and a team editor. These are a part of the commissioner's disk, which is now available. A round-robin schedule routine is programmed into **Weaver II**, but is quite limited.

Earl Weaver Baseball II is a game of contrasts. The presentation, and to a certain extent the user interface, are clearly inferior, but the statistical basis and managerial options are first-rate.

Best strategy

As an action game **Weaver II** fails. The graphics, animation and sound are so poor they prohibit the player from being anything but frustrated. **Weaver II** works best as a strategy game. The manager options and strategy choices allow the player to control enough aspects of the game to make a difference.

In all, **Earl Weaver II** does not live up to its pre-release hype. Instead of being a revolutionary rewrite with vastly improved graphics, statistics and manager options, **Earl Weaver II** is simply a mildly improved version of **Weaver 1.5**. ❑

Cricket Simulator

Statistics can prove anything

By Brian Walker

Published by
Nelson Electronics

Systems
PC, mono graphics

Notes
Available from Nelson Electronics, 111 Hykeham Road, Lincoln LN6 8AD. Price £18.50 incl p&p

Rare is the game that is exactly what it claims to be, and yet **Cricket Simulator** is precisely that. Unfortunately, however, it is not a game. There are no graphics as such, just lines of text and furthermore, they're in black and white!

Despite what anyone not possessed of the faith might consider drawbacks, **Cricket Simulator** will offer the true cricket fan far more than all the commercial offerings put together.

Of course this is not saying much and indeed **Cricket Simulator** offers nothing at all for those who would seek to emulate the captaincy of, say, Viv Richards. For **Cricket Simulator** is a replay game demanding no input from the player whatsoever. Or, as the introduction puts it, 'sit back and have a glass of champagne'. Cynics would say a strong cup of coffee would be more appropriate.

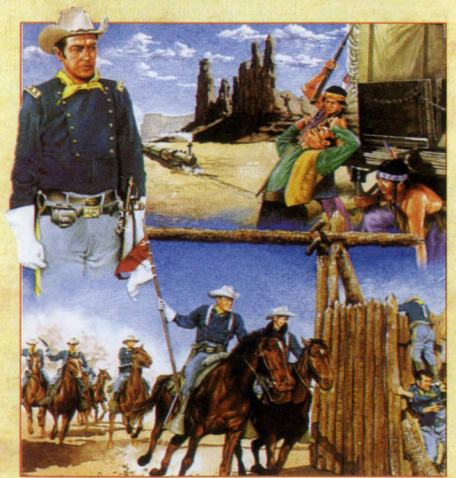
To set the simulation in motion the player must select which countries are participating. The documentation makes no mention of what teams are included, so to play safe I chose England v Australia. The players included are all current but this does not matter a great deal for reasons explained later. The next (and last) decision to be made is the type of wicket to be played on ('fair' in this example). After that the program runs itself.

The 'graphics' consist of an abbreviated scoreboard and a brief ball-by-ball text commentary at the bottom of the screen. The speed with which all this occurs can be varied. In 'very fast' mode a test match could probably be finished in 30 minutes.

At the conclusion there is a very detailed scorecard, which is automatically saved to disc as an ASCII file so it can be viewed or printed out for future reference.

The results of the matches are based on the relative batting and bowling averages combined with a random number generator. These averages may be modified by the user *ad infinitum*. In addition names may be changed and brand new teams cre-

TAKE COMMAND OF



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ENGLAND **INNINGS: 1**

Batsman	How Out	Runs	4s	6s	Apps	Dels
Gooch	c.Healy b.Hughes	58	4	0	5	82
Atherton	LBW b.Alderman	6	0	0	2	33
Hick	LBW b.Alderman	102	8	2	5	178
Lamb	c.Healy b.Rackemann	20	3	0	3	45
Ramprakash	c.Healy b.Alderman	37	5	0	0	48
Smith	c.Healy b.Alderman	10	1	0	0	16
Russell	LBW b.Alderman	59	4	0	0	108
Pringle	c.Marsh b.Hughes	24	2	0	0	38
DeFreitas	not out	71	8	0	3	136
Small	LBW b.Alderman	34	3	1	2	45
Malcolm	c.Healy b.Taylor	18	1	0	6	38

EXTRAS : 26
TOTAL : 465 all out

Fall of wickets: 44 (2), 106 (1), 157 (4), 223 (5), 239 (6), 248 (3), 296 (8), 366 (7), 418 (10), 465 (11)

Bowling analysis

Bowler	Overs	Mdns	Wkts	Runs	Nbs/Wds
Alderman	38	3	6	129	3
Rackemann	29	2	1	103	1
Hughes	34	2	2	139	1
Taylor	25.2	4	1	94	4

AUSTRALIA **INNINGS: 1**

Batsman	How Out	Runs	4s	6s	Apps	Dels
Marsh	c.Ramprakash b.Malcolm	0	0	0	0	15
Taylor	b.Malcolm	110	11	3	2	155
Boon	c.Russell b.DeFreitas	198	17	3	14	291
Border	LBW b.Pringle	22	2	0	1	53
Jones	b.DeFreitas	44	2	1	3	70
Waugh	b.Small	18	2	1	0	25
Healy	c.Russell b.Small	13	1	0	1	17
Taylor	b.Malcolm	8	0	0	0	24
Hughes	b.Small	5	1	0	0	9
Rackemann	not out	0	0	0	1	3
Alderman	b.Malcolm	0	0	0	0	2

EXTRAS: 23
TOTAL: 441 all out

Fall of wickets: 18 (1), 239 (2), 315 (4), 387 (3), 406 (5), 421 (6), 433 (7), 441 (9), 441 (8), 441 (11)

Bowling analysis

Bowler	Overs	Mdns	Wkts	Runs	Nbs/Wds
Malcolm	32.5	4	4	118	4
DeFreitas	26	2	2	112	2
Small	28	5	3	87	3
Pringle	22	1	1	124	2

Getting results: part of a representative printout of a match

ated. Herein lies the real value of the program, this and the 'what if' factor. What if, for instance, Ramprakash was able to score more than 29 in an innings?

It's impossible to criticise a program such as this. It is what it is. Take it or leave it. Me? I'll run to mid wicket and say that creating player input such as being able to decide who is to bowl, when to declare and so on, could have been added without any loss of integrity. But that's a cricket fan for you. Moan, moan, moan. Even when it's not raining.

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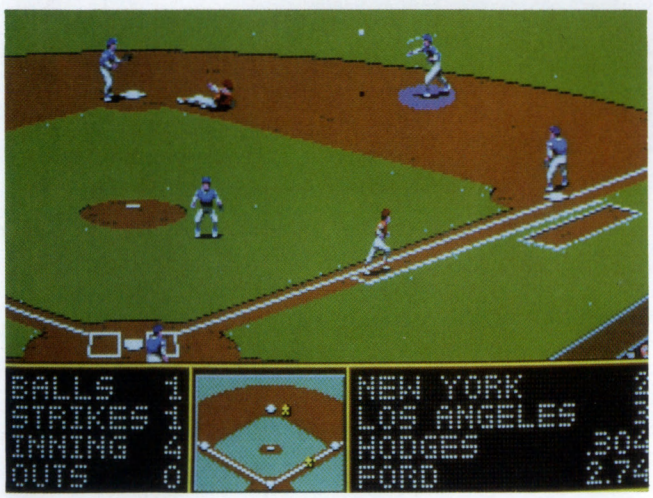
Conlon Developments, Watery Lane, Darwen, Lancashire.

THE SPORTS LOCKER

Richard Jacobs examines the human factor

Out of the ball park:
Tony La Russa's
Ultimate Baseball



Every so often, the gaming world experiences an innovation that takes players to a new level in competitive realism – a leap forward from which there is no going back.

The development of the modem play feature in **NFL Pro League Football** (Micro Sports), which allows users to play 'live' against each other over the telephone lines, is a monumental breakthrough that promises to revolutionize the way computer sports simulations are viewed.

Big talk? Maybe. But for someone whose sports gaming began with the 1966 version of Strat-O-Matic baseball, I've had a lot of time to sample, compare and experience sports simulations.

The one item that has never been duplicated so far is the human opponent. Let's face it. The excitement and satisfaction of trouncing one's fellow man is a major element of sport. And that is what's been the missing link.

On track

Certainly, the progress from the early board games has been tremendous. Computer simulations transformed stat-keeping from drudgery into pleasure, so much so that people now complain about games that don't track enough stats.

And, for the most part, users no longer have to play each and every game when duplicating a season. Simply set the parameters for computer v computer and watch the league develop, jumping in only to play a favourite team.

But the big thing that computers did (or so I thought for a long while) was to provide an always-ready opponent. No longer would the gamer have to coach each team, or stare longingly at player cards while waiting for a friend to drop by. A simple flick of a switch and instant opposition awoke within the CPU.

Growing demand

That was good. In fact, that was very good. But for dedicated sports replay enthusiasts it soon became apparent that it wasn't quite good enough. Growing numbers of players wanted human competition.

Some felt that computer intelligence wasn't challenging. Others enjoyed the camaraderie of swapping experiences with persons of similar interests. Still others needed to boost their egos by acquiring 'bragging rights' to flaunt in the face of a defeated foe.

So we tried artificially to create the experience of human competition. Because head-to-head play on an individual game basis was not possible, we formed leagues. In this way we could compete on a grand scale by monitoring season standings in contrast to single game scores. Initially, these leagues were 'played' by mail and, more recently, over electronic bulletin boards.

A baseball league, for example, might require the home team manager to play the game. The visiting

team would be managed by the computer; the line-up and pitching rotation were predetermined by the absent human manager. The results would be uploaded to the bulletin board and league stats posted by a league commissioner.

That sounds good (don't all theories) but the key to the success of such a league is the honour of its members.

It is quite easy for the home manager to cheat by replaying games until his team won.

And so I found out when a baseball league in which I was involved saw a team post a 48–2 home record when it could only muster a 24–26 road tally. The manager, of course, claimed it was only a result of his managerial talent.

Some newer products attempt to control this potential for abuse by offering a programmable computer manager.

File management

In baseball simulations, the visiting player predetermines managerial strategy in key situations (such as a tendency to hit-and-run, or aggressive base-running), which are saved to disk.

The managerial file can then be transferred to the home player to incorporate when the games are actually played. This solution was an improvement, but far from perfect.

But now that head-to-head play is available, why bother with such uncertainties. Simply dial up an opponent, anywhere in the world, and duke it out – live, in person, and with no cheating, replays or altered files. And if you're not into league play, it doesn't matter, because nothing can beat going against a live opponent for pure fun, even it is only for a single game.

And so it is that I welcome modem play to computer sports simulations. American football is an ideal forerunner since it is so strategy oriented. But baseball, boxing, or golf would also prove dynamic vehicles for modem competition.

In any event, when I read the fine print on those new software boxes I'll not only be checking for graphics quality, sound board compatibility, and mouse support, but also for true modem play. ❑

Shooting at random

Now some random thoughts while waiting for **UMSII** to execute a turn.

■ A gold star to Electronic Arts (EA) on its **Earl Weaver Baseball II** upgrade policy. By sending in a manual cover from previous **EWB** versions, consumers can buy both **EWB II** and **Commissioner's Disk II** for $39.95. Full retail is $79.95. On the other hand, selling the **1990 Players Stats** disk separately is annoying. Since **EWB II** is, in effect, a brand new game, why not package it with the latest season disk instead of with randomly selected teams from years past?

■ To the extreme: **APBA Baseball** continues its habit of selling as add-ons those features that other baseball games include at no extra charge. The latest is a $49.95 **Micro Manager**, which enables computer management of teams, that is, a computer opponent. Seems basic to me. Speaking of APBA, I'm sure there is a tightly defined market for its computer **Pro Bowling** game. I hope the company is reaching it.

■ More basic: 18 people can play a baseball game without a manager. But they can't play without a ball park. That's as basic as it gets. Then why is SSI charging $19.95 for the **Tony LaRussa Ultimate Baseball** AL and NL stadium disks? That's $19.95 each, or nearly $40 for ball parks plus the cost of the game. It seems like an unpleasant industry trend is growing.

■ A for effort to Fantasm Sports for developing a 'situational statistics' baseball game that tried to be all things to all people. **Fantom Manager** included all major league teams, a programmable manager, an automatic schedule player, a stats compiler, a standings board, a league leader program, general manager, display of compiled batting averages during game play, and hundreds of statistics. Unfortunately, **Fantom Manager** kept locking up, crashing, misreading data, or otherwise causing problems during season play. I'm told that a total rewrite is in the works for next season. I hope the company gets the bugs worked out of this conceptually intriguing game.

■ **Pro League**: Owing to legal realities, the surnames of certain players have been replaced in rosters by references to position. Those team files can be edited with a word processor by typing over, for example, the word 'Quarterback' with the name (randomly chosen, of course) 'Cunningham'. Edited files must be saved in ASCII mode to work.

■ Good luvin' gone bad: failure to issue current season disks for **John Madden Football** sure took the lustre off a promising sports simulation. Last one I saw was for the 1989 season. If EA won't support a game, how can it expect anyone else to?

■ The abysmal printing options available in SSI's **Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball** is inexcusable. Only the box scores of individual games can be printed. Compiled stats, team rosters, standings, or league leaders cannot. That's awfully puzzling for a game containing franchise All-Star teams and touting detailed and accurate stats.

■ Worse yet, **TLUB** doesn't support any Laserjet printers. If you own one of those, you can't print even a box score. **TLUB** does feature long-awaited franchise All-Star teams. Players who experienced stellar single seasons for a franchise make up the roster, using the stats from their super year. Not as good as All-Stars based on lifetime averages, but better than a roster of mediocre players chosen at random.

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Russian duet

By Paul Rigby

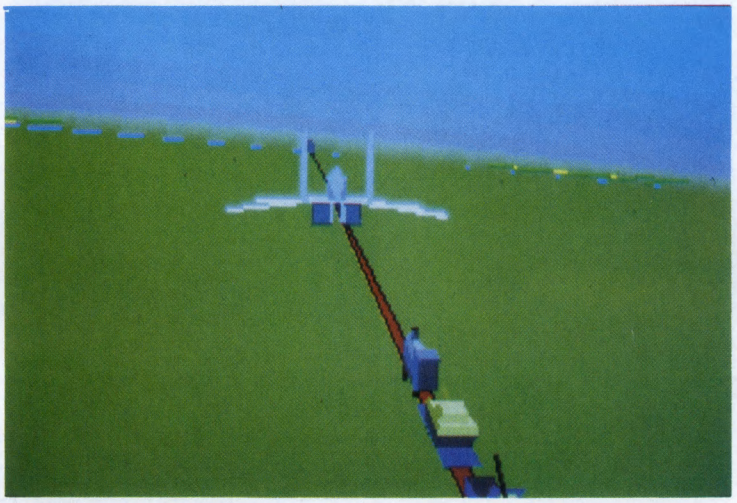
Simis, which may rank as the highest qualified flight simulation programming team in the UK, designed **MiG-29M Super Fulcrum** as a sequel to **MiG-29 Fulcrum**. The package includes a 110-page manual, of which only 52 pages are in English; a glossy, fold-out colour map and an excellent pictorial volume of *Military Jets* (whose Salamander Press artwork starkly resembles the *Orbis Warplane* periodicals).

The game starts with a pleasingly presentable rolling demonstration of a MiG-29 flying through a valley. From here the scene changes to the overall mission objectives and, finally, to the introductory menu.

Taking off from an airfield on the western side of the map, the player heads for all manner of enemy installations, from armoured vehicles to airfields, on the enemy's eastern area, with the eventual aim of taking the enemy HQ.

Play is dynamic – the enemy is always on the move and will repair battle damage. If a bridge is hit, for example, it can only be expected to be out of action for a short time because the enemy will start repair work.

The principle of taking one aircraft and pitting it against an enemy in an open scenario would be admirable if it had been initiated two or three years ago. The problem is that the whole design structure for **Super Fulcrum** is old-fashioned, harking back to the days of the **Falcon** mission disks and Digital Integration's **F-16 Combat Pilot** (which still offers more game play than **Super Fulcrum** does, even today).



U and non U

The premise of 'you against the world' is outmoded and redundant. Nowadays players want to see interaction, wing-men, to feel involved in a shifting battle scenario that leads a player to believe he is one element of a small cog in a combat situation: **Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe**, **Red Baron**, the forthcoming **Falcon 3.0**, **Their Finest Hour,** and **A10 Tank Killer** are all examples of flight simulations that encompass this design philosophy.

Unfortunately, these perceived design flaws are compounded by poor PC sound which uses only the Adlib sound board for brief musical bursts. The PC speaker is used throughout a flight and it is abysmal as usual. Poor sound robs the player of an important sensory aid. One of the first signs of trouble, for example, comes from hearing varying pitches in engine volume and pitch. The PC speaker's engine noise is too hard on the ears to be heard for more than a few seconds.

Flaps haven't been implemented, which screws up the landing phase and negates one or two attack options. It's puzzling why an 'advanced flight model' is offered but flaps aren't.

If the escape button is pressed while in flight, the pilot is ejected into the DOS prompt immediately, with no safety-net of 'Are you sure?' to prevent disaster. On one occasion this button was hit on the way back from a long, gruelling mission, which left me seething. Where were the playtesters, Domark?

Finally, the manual is a mess. Controls are scattered everywhere and the labelling is half-hearted with silly spelling mistakes ('falps' instead of 'flaps').

Looking at the more positive aspects of the simulation, the player receives a choice of two flight models. The advanced flight model (present on the PC only) is superb, offering the most polished flight model ever experienced within a combat flight simulation. Other plus points include good take off, a building of inertia before rotation, and realistically tricky landing. The allocation of waypoints (four, in all) during the planning phase is well implemented and easy to use while the blackout sequence during high-g flight is nicely portrayed.

Technical point

Super Fulcrum is a mixed bag. It's old-fashioned, and what looks like some rather hurried design decisions from Simis blend with some shoddy production work from Domark. Yet there are elements of the play that are commendable, even innovative – such as the flight model. An enthusiast with cash to spare might find **Super Fulcrum** worth a look for its technical achievements. But look elsewhere if you;'re watching the pennies and cents. ❑

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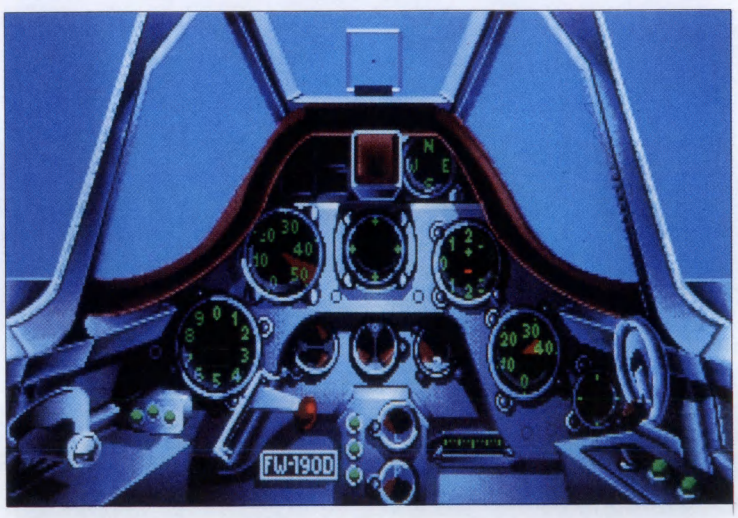

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IBM PC

PC graphics
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Supports
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Well it's December already! Either it's raining or snowing or just plain cold where you are (you lot in Sydney and Honolulu hang on for a sec), so what better than climbing into a snug cockpit and warming yourself up by a few heated exchanges with an opponent? This month's column we provide some advice on discovering the most effective insults... er... combat tactics in **Gunship 2000** and **Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe**.

But first, a more general recommendation. As part of my training in arm-chair readiness I've been reading *Fighter Combat: Tactics and Maneuvering* by one Robert L Shaw (available from the Naval Institute Press in the USA, ISBN 0-87021-059-9), and wanted to share a few pointers I've gleaned from my reading so far. This is a great book, by the way, despite the engineerese dialect that haunts the thing ('All the foregoing tactics are predicated on the high-T/W fighter having a significant energy advantage at the first pass.' Translated: 'Faster planes are better.' I know,

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe: coming up from below and behind works well

the jargon says more, but you get the picture). Nothing else I've read comes anywhere near the depth of analysis provided in the 400-plus pages of *Fighter Combat*, and I'm sure any simulation designers worth their salt are making careful use of the information contained therein.

The opening chapters are on gunnery, and emphasize the fact that gun tactics are relevant whether the plane is an ME-109 or an F-16.

The most useful computer simulation advice I've been given so far has to do with leading the target. With Second World War planes and earlier (those without predictor or Lead-Computing Optical Sight), the main thing to pay attention to is how High-G or Low-G the attacker's lead is going to be.

High-G leads (that is, when engaged in a really tight, close-in turning battle with another fighter) are the trickiest, and often prove most effective when the defending airplane is actually below the nose of the attacker (and thus out of sight in our simulations). Low-G attacks are easier, and can be managed better from a distance, when the attacker doesn't have to turn as hard nor lead as far.

Two important points derive from the above information: first, the attacker's closure rate has to be balanced against the need to maintain high energy at all times (that is, keeping the plane moving fast). Slowing the closure rate improves one's tracking opportunities, but can result in loss of energy (speed and altitude are both forms of energy for a plane in combat). Closing too fast makes it way too easy for the attacker and defender to switch roles suddenly.

Second, lead should be chosen so that, ideally, the defender flies into the attacker's sights; in other words, ample lead should be taken so that the attacker isn't always having to pull back on the stick to stay in a hard turn while attempting to shoot. Ample lead provides room for a lower-G shot, and thus more accuracy.

This is all useful information for any good air combat simulation, but comes into play especially with **Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe**. The limited view offered in a number of the planes (especially the FW-190) requires the player to abstract more than usual in thinking about closing with a defender.

Sole reliance upon visual contact, without keeping the entire three-dimensional relation between attacker and defender in mind, will quickly prove inadequate. Learning how to manage closure in the experimental fighters in particular (the ME-262 and ME-163) is a tricky business. Don't be afraid to use air brakes while making a head-on attack.

The big difference between **Secret Weapons** and most other air combat simulations has to do with the kind of air combat the player is immersed in most of the time.

Against the bomb

SWOTL is very much a fighters-against-bombers design, despite the frequent need to deal with the bombers' fighter escorts, and thus the tactics used are slightly different from those used in dogfights.

Which reminds me, in a previous column I indicated that the attacker should never make a head-on pass against bombers, when technically I

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should have recommended the opposite; this advice was based on experience with **SWOTL** where, as a novice, I'd find myself shot to pieces while attempting to dive and fly behind the bomber formation, without getting much of a chance to do damage during the rapid closure rates characteristic of a head-on pass.

I still think this is good advice for starters, but with experience, the player should be able to manage head-on closure rates effectively enough to make them preferable to the more dangerous tail-on attacks.

Coming up from below and behind continues to work well for me in any event. The trick in head-on attacks is to find the optimal closure rate that's slow enough to provide enough time to shoot a bomber to pieces, but fast enough to maintain enough energy for extension (fleeing) past the group.

In **SWOTL** it hasn't seemed to make much difference yet which airplane in a formation the attack begins with; of course, if a rocket or bomb can be dropped to break up the bomber formation, individual bombers will prove easier to pick off. Staying outside the 'box' of the formation (or whatever is left of it) makes is particularly important.

Gunship 2000: fuel management is a crucial aspect of the game

Arrest warrants

On to **Gunship 2000**. There are a few important things to know up front about the mission designs. First off, warrant officers 1 (WO1) aren't going to do a very good job of anything. Once out of single chopper mode and into flight mode, assume your own helicopter as the main weapons system for awhile longer yet. WO1s won't do much in the way of picking and firing at targets, and are abysmal at search and rescue (especially the rescue part).

If part of a mission is to pick up troops or cargo, pilot the Blackhawk yourself and land, disconnect rotors, hugs and kisses then take off on your own. Use the accompanying gunships mainly as extra cover; better yet, divide your flight up into heavy and light sections, and send the heavies in first to try to clear the area of any threats (the computer pilots are much more aggressively concerned for their own welfare when they don't have a genius human like yourself to keep them company).

Fill 'er up

Resupplying at bases or FARPs involves landing and disconnecting rotors. One hit of the 9 key fills her right up.

While it may be evident, especially early on, that if the player takes longer than 20 minutes on a mission the commanding officers start to get cranky, don't let that turn into encouragement to fly a chopper on fumes. If there's any opportunity to tank up between primary and secondary objectives, take it. I can't tell you how infuriating it is to fly an especially successful mission only to find there's not enough fuel to return to base. Fuel management is a crucial part of the simulation, and sometimes the missions are just plain unfair. Life at the bottom is rough.

A couple of more interesting details in the mission design. If the player loses a computer pilot during a flight mission, a future mission involving search and rescue for him will be generated by the software.

Hostage returns

It's possible, in other words, to get back that highly cherished second lieutenant, even after the SA-9 hidden in the mosque has made a religious man out of him.

There are camels lurking somewhere in the desert, along with some peculiar billboards (reminiscent of the Burma Shave campaign in the US way back when). And flying in river canyons and mountain passes is a thrill not to be missed (watch the blade-tips of your compatriots using Shift 5 to avoid any untoward contact with hills on their part).

In terms of flight performance, it's best to stay below 100 feet whenever possible; slowing down when near ground targets with search radar improves stealth, and flying around rather than at enemy radar is of course a brilliant idea.

If things look too quiet, feel free to pop up to 200–400 feet and find the local blues festival; although the chances are you won't be invited.

Though the manual waxes with enthusiasm over the auto-rotation key, avoid it unless you're less fumble-fingered than I; one too many times I've hit 9 instead of 0, and the results are never very pretty.

The M-261s are wonderful little insects; hold the target in sights only long enough to get one off, then split fast! Hellfires are of course quite useful and the weapon of choice for the AH-64.

TOWs look easy but having to stay locked on until the missile hits is quite risky. The cannon will do amazing amounts of damage to both ground and airborne targets, don't be shy with it. It's great if it works for you, though; up collective to take a look around at hover, then 0 to drop down again to a safe altitude.

Energy saver

Don't feel the need to go all out at top speed; flying slower conserves fuel quite a bit, and reduces visibility as well.

As weapons are released, the helicopters will fly faster at the same settings; reduce the added speed and convert it into even more fuel conservation. Gee, blow up the world and save energy at the same time... what a sim!

Next column we'll get into how to move from leader of a flight to pilot of that neat AH-66 Comanche. As always, reader's responses on flight sims are very welcome – please feel free to share any tips you might have with us. ❑

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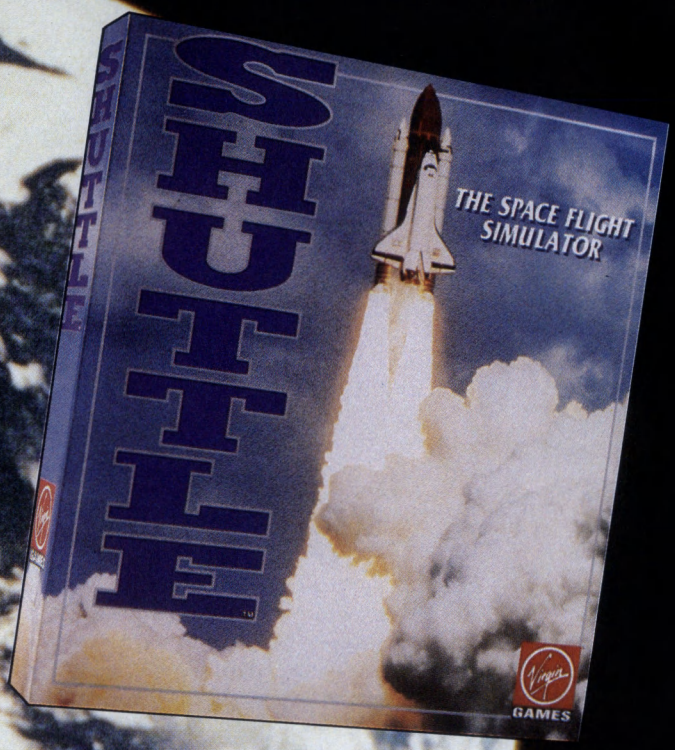

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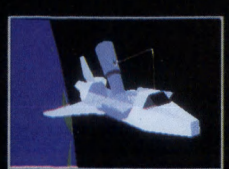
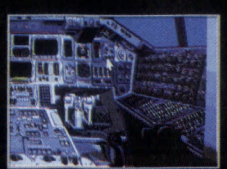
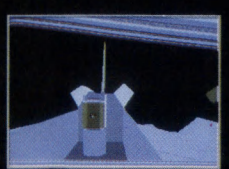
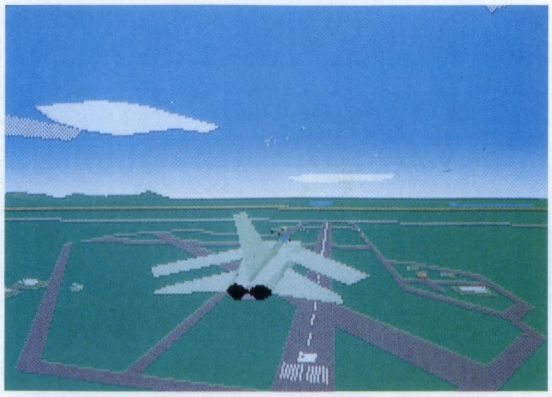
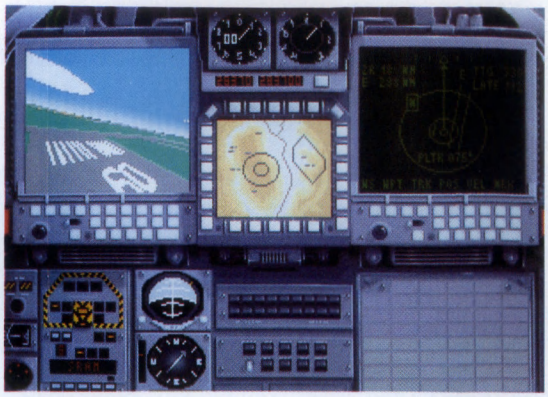








Paul Rigby gets down with Tornado

LET'S TWIST AGAIN

One of the most visible participants of the Gulf war made good the promise of delivering fire and brimstone to the reluctant heroes of Saddam: the Panavia Tornado. While it was doing so, the programming team of Digital Integration was all set to embark on a helicopter simulation. That is, until the world and his second cousin demanded a Tornado sim to emulate the boys in blue.

Eureka! **Tornado**, the imaginative title for a new Digital Integration combat flight simulation with a new 3D engine and modelling system, was born.

Deceptive approach

Tornado will pit the player against the Iraqis. The structure will be that of a campaign in which each missions affects the next. Interaction with ground forces will also be included. Deception tactics may be added in the air and on the ground.

Digital Integration has come along way since its last major simulation product: **F16 Combat Pilot**. DI's Dave Marshall explains: 'The landscape in **Tornado** is generations ahead of **F-16 Combat Pilot**. You've got real airfield layouts: multi-runway, multi-taxiway, perimeter tracks. You fly across this thing and it's *real*.

'All the buildings, structures and so on are all from diagrams, plans and photographs. There are several hangars, hardened aircraft shelters, all from RAF plans. The emphasis on **Tornado** is realism. You can fly down valleys, along rivers, there are railways, highways and so on. Usable scenery such as this was not available in **F16 Combat Pilot**. There are multi-line railways running through stations, with sidings, and so on. Our new 3D system enables us to create detail we haven't seen anywhere else.'

DI is confident about **Tornado**'s visuals. 'I've seen nothing that approaches **Tornado** visually,' says Marshall, 'and that includes **Falcon 3.0**. We see nothing to worry about with that product.'

Fighting talk! In fact, DI has undulating terrain of its own. Apparently, the topography is undulating with multi-polygonal mountains. 'Over 25% of the landscape area is occupied by hills,' confides Marshall, 'so you can fly up and down hillsides hugging the terrain – accurate collision detection is paramount.'

Undulating terrain should surely result in slow game play, but Marshall says: 'We took great pains so that it won't slow down. On a 386 it's running on close to 20 frames a second.'

Over 30 different aircraft will be included, such as the Su-17 (Fitter), Mi-26 (Halo - large transport helicopter), Il-76 (Soviet AWACS), Tu-160 (Blackjack), Mig-29, Mi-24 (Hind), F-22, E-3A (AWACS), A-10, F-117, B2, Harrier, Apache and Chinook (a twin-rotor helicopter).

DI is trying to get away from the John Wayne approach of the player against the world. Missions will be multi-aircraft affairs (including co-ordinated multi-directional attacks where four **Tornados**, for example, will hit a target from four different, directions).

The player will be able to specify approach paths, targets and weapon configurations, as well as support from other aircraft – for example, it's possible to send a Wild Weasel team up ahead of the player's main strike force.

In addition, radio contact will also be included in some form, although this feature has yet to be implemented.

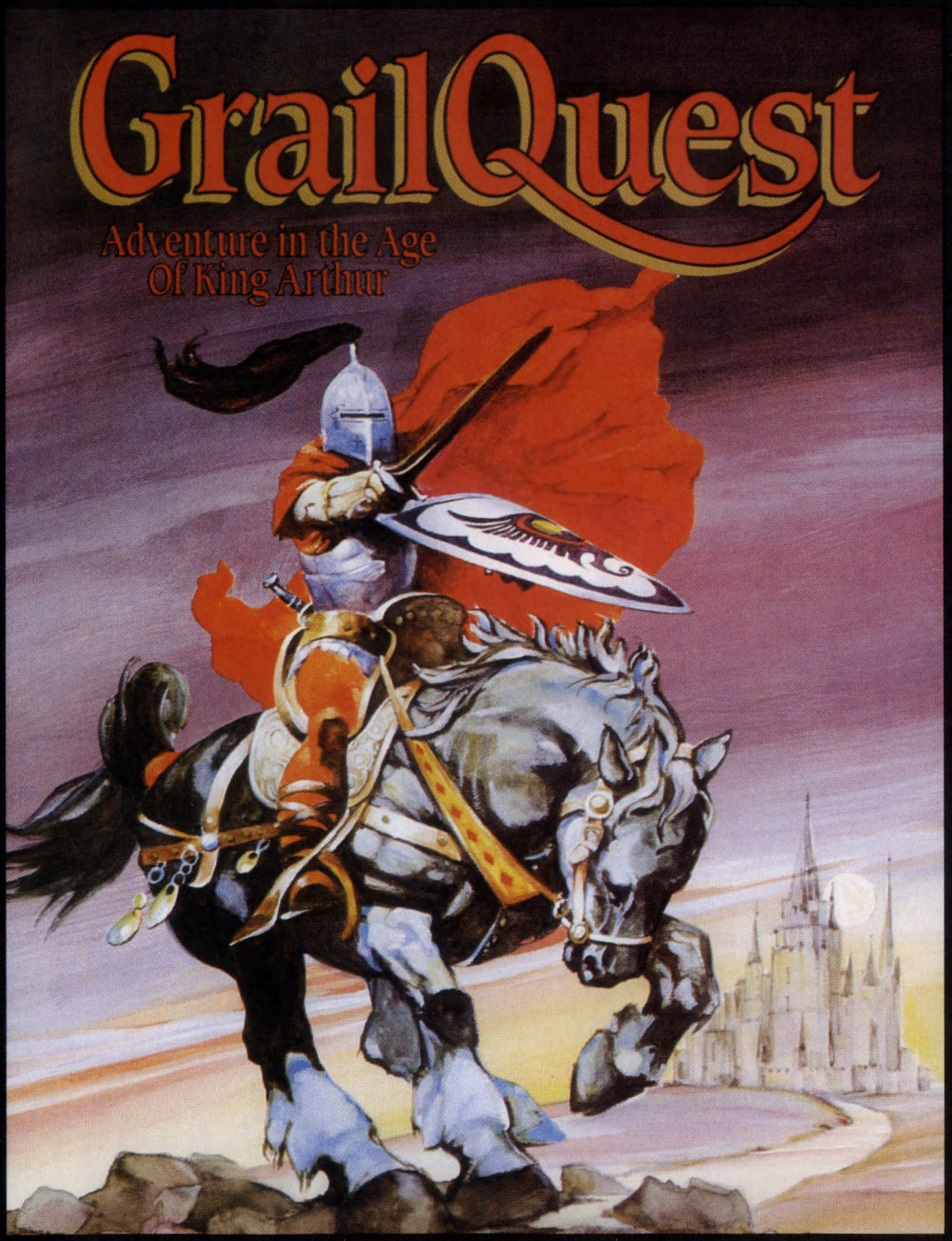
Preparing the way

Don't expect **Tornado** yet, though. 'There's a good six months to go in terms of putting the entire game structure together,' says Marshall, 'however, when it does appear be prepared for other products to follow in quick time.'

After **Tornado**, Digital Integration will be producing a F-16 simulation (will this aircraft ever go away?) with a similar 3D system but with a modified game structure.

Intriguingly, both **Tornado** and **F-16** will be able to be linked via modem. ❑

Release details
Tornado will be released for the IBM PC in February 1992, with versions for other machines to follow



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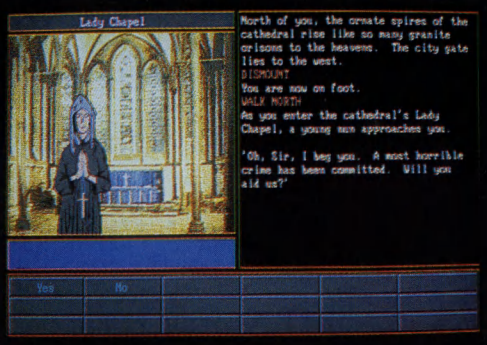
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North of you, the ornate spires of the cathedral rise like so many granite orisons to the heavens. The city gate lies to the west.
DISMOUNT
You are now on foot.
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As you enter the cathedral's Lady Chapel, a young nun approaches you.
'Oh, Sir, I beg you. A most horrible crime has been committed. Will you aid us?'
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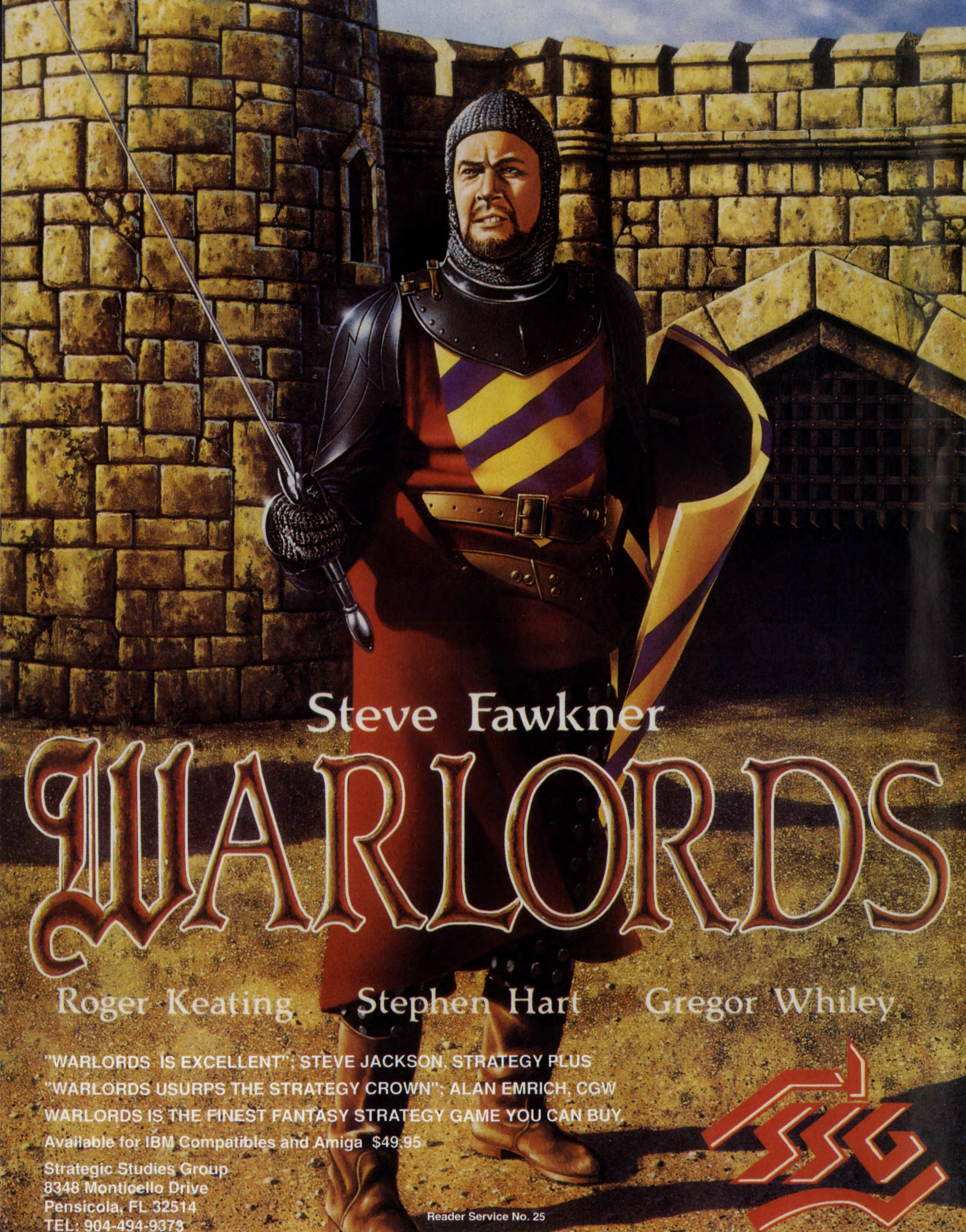
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Strike II

Eight seconds and counting

By Steven Wartofsky

When bitmaps reigned supreme and arcade games on the Amiga defined the state-of-the-art, companies like Incentive and Dynamix began to impress people with something called three-dimensional solid-fill animation.

Virtually anything released using this new animation technology looked impressive, though many of the actual games, like **Dark Side**, were mediocre at best.

Pastures new

That time is long gone – well, maybe only a year or two, but that's a glacial epoch in computer terms. Players not only take such animations for granted, they expect them to run smoothly alongside highly complex game or simulation scenarios. Even arcade-style games make some use of this technology to more amply represent space in three dimensions. What a shame for **Strike II**, which is way too little, too late.

There's nothing to this design that hasn't been done more effectively in games from long ago. Billing itself as a 'flight simulation', **Strike II** fails to come even close to the effective representation of flight that was characteristic of **Starglider II**.

The craft in the game all tend to operate close to the ground, but prove nowhere near as fascinating to watch or control in the horizontal plane as, say, **Simulcra**. The player gets a chance in the opening screens to choose from different alien creatures' stocks of ships, but the fiction of being from this or that alien race doesn't hold a candle to equivalent possibilities in, say, **Lightspeed** or even **Terran Envoy**.

So what's the point? The player must sit through a supposedly engrossing opening bit-mapped animation, wherein his little pixellated figure crawls ominously and slowly through a big, cavernous indoor high-tech space, encounters a cyborg waiting at the door to the hangars (an in-game representative of the critic, no doubt, the glassy stare at least seems appropriate), and somehow fools same into letting him into the game (sorry, no dice from this cyborg!).

The various options present then offer the illusion of being able to configure up the design to give some variety to play. Granted, different ships do perform slightly differently, and the small-scale terrain representation in-game is almost as good as those in SSI's **Dragonstrike** when the latter are set on minimum detail, but the differences aren't significant enough to offer any substantial variety in play. Like so many games I've seen before, it soon becomes irrelevant as **Strike II** has chosen to follow yet another tradition by killing the player off an average of eight seconds into each round of play.

What is especially infuriating is that between the opening sequence, the configuration screens, and the transitions into the actual game, setting up a round of play takes about twice the amount of time as the actual play itself. Maybe after many hours of attempting to move past the opening moments of the game this ratio might improve, but it would require the patience of a saint to get there.

Pay load

Then again, what would be the point? The only pay-off in the design is a high score. Perhaps many of the problems in this design could be dealt with in an upgrade, but none of that would save **Strike II** from itself, as the inherent design is at best derivative of last-generation classics in the genre (and a hodge-podge of those, to boot).

I can think of one other game that **Strike II** rather ominously reminds me of: Digital Integration's **ATF II**.

Perhaps the similarity in titles should be a warning to all prospective game buyers: if it's got a 'II' after the title, maybe think twice about parting with the fruit of your labour for it. ❑

Published by
Millennium

Systems
Amiga and ST; PC version to follow

PC graphics
VGA, EGA

Supports
Roland and Adlib sound boards; joystick and mouse

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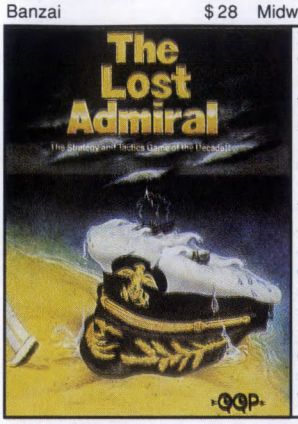
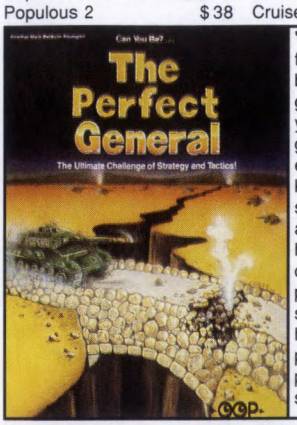
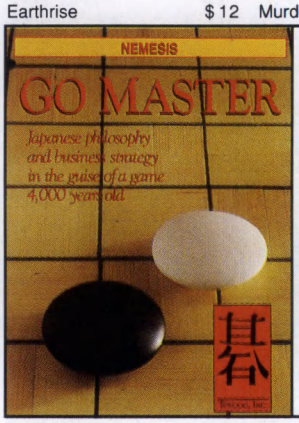


'LOST ADMIRAL' from **QUANTUM QUALITY PRODUCTIONS** is a turn based production naval strategy game. Features 9 scenarios, a random map scenario, 15 campaign games, flagships with special abilities, very strong artificial intelligence, in depth officers ranking system, accumulates your career history as you play, 2 player option, and sound board support. In short better than **EMPIRE.** **$34**

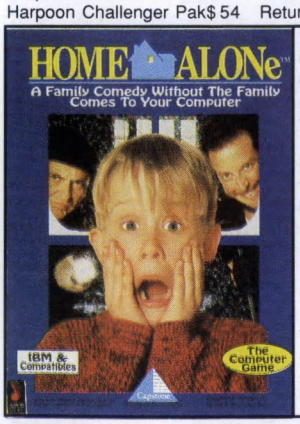


'PERFECT GENERAL' from **QQP INC** is a turn based ground war game. Features 12 years of play testing, great maps in VGA, easy to use mouse or keyboard interface, 14 scenarios, very strong artificial intelligence, hidden movement, line of sight option, in depth player ranking system, saves your career history as you play, 2 player option, modem play, sound board support. **$34**

'WORLDS AT WAR' from **RAW SOFTWARE** is a game of naval combat on a galatic scale. Simple in concept, you can play the tactical study for an hour or the campaign game for a weekend. Features include hidden movement, random map generation, design your own task forces, capture planets to build more units. **CGW** said "...like **EMPIRE**, what this game has is play-value". **$29**



'NEMESIS GO VER 5' from **TOYOGO** is the ultimate computer **GO** program. With the simplicity of checkers and the complexity of chess, GO is both an enjoyable recreation and a serious strategy game. **GO MASTER** is a basic GO player and tutor. **JOSEKI GENIUS** adds complex corner openings. **TACTICAL WIZARD** is the ultimate tutor offering in depth tactical analysis. GO is 4000 years old. **$39**



'HOME ALONE' from **CAPSTONE** is an action game based on the movie. You play Kevin trying to foil Harry & Marv. You hurry to create traps & pitfalls from the attic to the basement. Your tools are common household items. Soon Harry & Marve appear for the chase. You attempt to lead them into your traps. Features digitized sound & graphics in 256 color VGA, with sound board support. **$27**

'TRUMP CASTLE II' from **CAPSTONE** puts you in Atlantic City at the Trump Castle Casino Resort with actual digitized images and sound from the casino itself. Features include 256 color VGA graphics, sound board support, digitized animations and multiplayer capability for six gambling games, baccarat, blackjack, craps, roulette, video poker, and slot machines. **$32**

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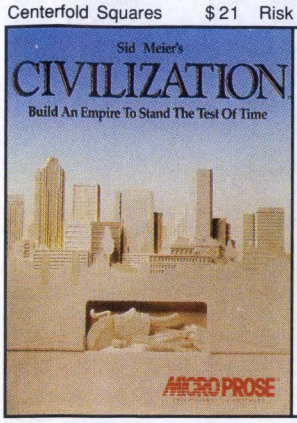

'CIVILIZATION' from **MICROPROSE** "is a competitive multi-player strategy game with a great deal of replayability" **CGW**. You explore cities, continents, and the world in an **EMPIRE** like way. You make economic decisions prioritizing technological growth in order to advance your civilization more rapidly than the other players. The best of both **SIMCITY** & **EMPIRE**. **$39**

'THE TWO TOWERS' from **INTERPLAY** is a roleplaying game based on Book 2 of the **LORD OF THE RINGS**. Battle orcs, trolls, wargs, ghosts, & oliphaunts. Travel through Fangorn Forest, over mountain passes, past the fortress cave complex, through the marsh and arrive at the two towers. Features automapping, digitized speech, point & click interface, 256 color VGA & sound board support. **$37**

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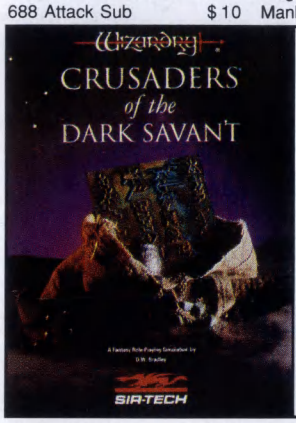
'CARRIERS AT WAR' from **SSG** is WW2 carrier warfare. Explore Pearl Harbor, Santa Cruz, Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons, & Marianas Turkey Shoot. Great graphics and simulation. You must seek out the enemy carriers, fleets and aircraft before they find you. Hundreds of ships & aircraft are individually modeled. With point & click interface, 256 color VGA & sound board support. **$37**



'CRUSADERS OF THE DARK SAVANT: WIZARDRY 7' from **SIRTECH** is high tech fantasy roleplaying at its best. **WIZ 7** includes multiple beginnings, outdoor campaigns in caves, forests, rivers, dungeons, and a complete city. NPCs talk to each other & entire computer controlled parties compete with the player. Features point & click interface, 256 color VGA & sound board support. **$39**

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'STARTREK: THE 25th ANNIVERSARY' from **INTERPLAY** combines a realistic 3D space flight simulator with an in depth role-playing game. Pilot the Enterprise through a simulation similar to Wing Commander. Discover dozens of planets, beam down to explore them. Each planet with its own unique adventure. Features point-and-click, 256 color VGA & adlib support. **$36**

IBM ADVENTURE

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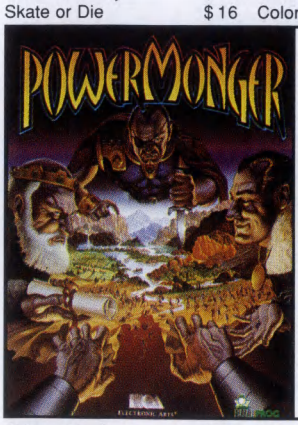

'POWER MONGER' from **ELECTRONIC ARTS** is a unique strategy game. A living world with forests, mountains, waterfalls, rivers, towns, farmers, shepherds, merchants, fisherman, weather, homes, jobs & NPCs with individual identities. Plan, produce, invent, negotiate, bribe, recruit subordinates, & feed your people. 3D zoom & rotate, play by modem, random maps & great graphics. **$34**

CHIPS & BITS CALL 800 -753 -GAME

IBM HARDWARE

Ad Lib Sound Card	$69
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Ad Lib MCA Snd Crd	$149
Ad Lib Visual Composr	$75
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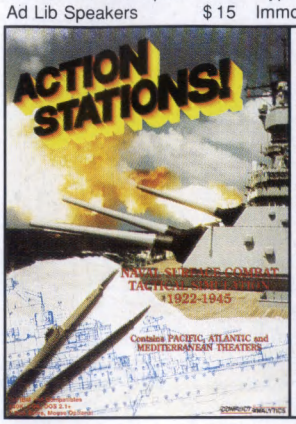

'ACTION STATIONS' from **RAW SOFTWARE** is a naval suface combat simulation. This game covers 1922 to 1945 in amazing detail. Features 21 status displays, 30 scenarios in the Atlantic, Med & Pacific, subordinate comanders, treatment of smoke, starshells, flares, radar, weather, shore batteries, aircraft spotting & more. Ships are modeled in detail. This is the premier **WW2** naval game. **$29**

Flight Stick	$46
Flight Stick w Falcon	$46
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Snd Blaster Speakers	$15
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Thrustmstr Weapn Cntrl	$79
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Thunder Board Spkrs	$15

IBM ROLE PLAYING

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Bard's Tale 1	$15
Bard's Tale 2	$19
Bard's Tale 3	$31
Bard's Tale Cnstrctn St	$34
Battletech 1 or 2	$31
Blade Warrior	$12
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Captain Blood	$9
Captive	$30
CHARACTER EDITORS	$16
Conan	$32
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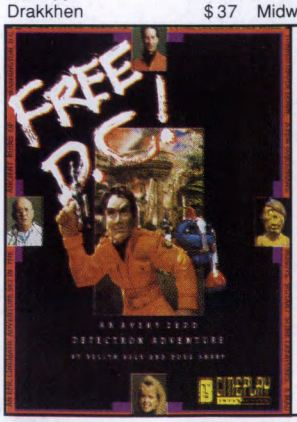
Cybergenic Ranger	$32
Darklands	$39
Darkspyre	$32
Drakkhen	$37

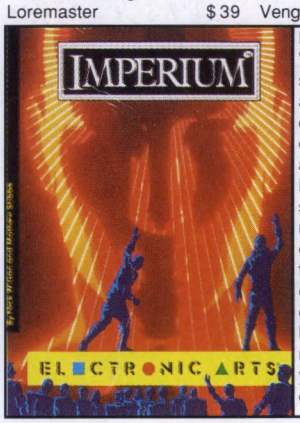


'FREE DC' from **CINEPLAY** is an unusual adventure game. Robot overlords have confined humanity to a zoo amid the ruins of Washington DC. Save the human race. Explore the ruins of ancient American monuments. Features digitized images & sound, live actors, NPC's with individual personalities, Point & click interface, 256 color VGA & sound board support. **$34**

Dragon Lord	$12
Dragon Wars	$31
Dusk of the Gods	$38
Earthling	$32
Elvira 1 Mistress Dark	$34
Elvira 2 Jaws Cerberus	$39
Escape from Hell	$17
Fire King	$7

IBM ROLEPLAYING

Flames of Freedom	$29
Fountain of Dreams	$15
Hard Nova	$19
Hero's Quest 1	$21
Hero's Quest 2 or 3	$34
Hyperspeed	$39
Immortal	$27
Journey	$12
Keef the Thief	$16
Keys to Maramon	$19
King's Bounty	$19
Knights of Legend	$30
Lord of the Rings 1	$34
Lord of the Rings 2	$37
Loremaster	$39



ELECTRONIC ARTS' 'IMPERIUM' is a space strategy game with amazing depth. You control the military, economic and political activities of the empire. Make alliances, design ships, build space navies, engage the enemy. Make economic treaties, set import export tax rates, control commodities, hoard the life extending drug nostrum. Delegate to your subordinate commanders. **$26**

Magic Candle 1	$15
Magic Candle 2	$38
Mechwarrior	$34
Megatraveller 1	$19
Megatraveller 2	$34
Megatraveller 3	$37
Midwinter 1	$24
Midwinter 2	$29
Might & Magic 1	$12
Might & Magic 2	$17
Might & Magic 1, 2&HB	$33
Might & Magic 3	$38
Mines of Titan	$12
Murder	$29
Paladin	$28
Paladin Scrolls Disk	$16

IBM ROLEPLAYING

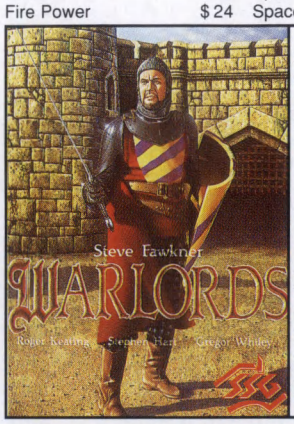
Phantasie 3	$12
Pirates	$9
Planet's Edge	$38
Prophecy 1	$12
Questron 2	$12
Rings of Medusa	$28
Scavengers	$34
Sentinal Worlds	$18
Shadowgate	$31
Sorcerian	$34
Space 1889	$19
Space Inc	$34
Space Rogue	$30
Space Wrecked	$32
Spirit of Excaliber	$29
Starflight 1 or 2	$19
Star Command	$34
Star Saga 1 or 2	$34
Sword of the Samurai	$9
Swrd Samrai & Pirates	$16
Tangled Tales	$21
Third Courier	$9
Times of Lore	$28
Tunnels & Trolls	$12
Twilight 2000	$34
Ultima Martian Dreams	$37
Ultima Savage Empire	$34
Ultima Trilogy	$35
Ultima 4 or 5	$35
Ultima 6 False Prophet	$39
Ultima 7 Black Gate	$45
Ultima Stygian Abyss	$48
Uncharted Waters	$42
Vengeance of Excalibur	$32
Windwalker	$28
Wizardry Trilogy	$32
Wizardry 4	$19
Wizardry 5	$32
Wizardry 6 Cosmic Frg	$37
Wizardry 7 Crusaders	$39

IBM ACTION /ARCADE

Airborne Ranger	$12
Altered Beast	$28
Amazing Spiderman	$15
Arachnaphobia	$28
Arkanoid 2	$28
Armor Alley	$27
Artura	$6
Back to the Future 2	$24
Barbarian	$9
Batman	$28
Batman The Movie	$24
Battle Master	$37
Battlestorm	$32
Bill & Ted's Excllnt Adv	$19
Blockbuster	$6
Blockout	$28
Brain Blaster	$28
Bruce Lee Lives	$28
Budokan	$17
Colorado	$9
Continuum	$32
Crackdown	$19
Crossbow	$29
Dark Century	$29
Day of the Viper	$32
D Generation	$32
Dig Dug	$6
Double Dragon 2	$15

IBM ACTION /ARCADE

Dr Doom's Revenge	$12
Dragon's Lair 1 or 2	$38
Drgn's Lair Singe Cstl	$37
F40 Pursuit	$31
Faces Tetris 3	$25
Finale	$12
Fire Power	$24



'WARLORDS' from **STRATEGIC STUDIES GROUP** is a huge eight player strategy game of empires and armies, castles and heroes, monsters and dragons. Capture cities to increase production. Use your heroes to form alliances. Improve castles and garrison troops to defend your empire. Lay siege to your enemies' castles to destroy his armies. Ambush his heroes to destroy leadership. **$29**

Freakn Funky Fuzzballs	$19
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Gauntlet 1 or 2	$9
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Golden Axe	$19
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Indy Jones Lst Crsade	$19
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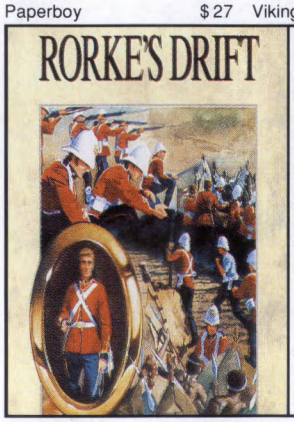
Night Breed	$15
Night Hunter	$25
Night Shift	$19
North & South	$27
Nova 9	$26
Obitus	$37
Obliterator	$6
Oil's Well	$21
Pac\ Man	$9
Paperboy	$27



'RORKE'S DRIFT' from **IMPRESSIONS** is a detailed simulation of the battle between 137 British soldiers & 4000 Zulu warriors that took place Jan 22 1879. You command the British in their attempt to hold out against the onslaught. You control each man, standing, sitting, prone, aiming, firing, reloading, running or walking. With 3D map, animated combat & movement mouse support & 256 color VGA. **$34**

Pick N Pile	$28
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Punisher	$12
Resolution 101	$24

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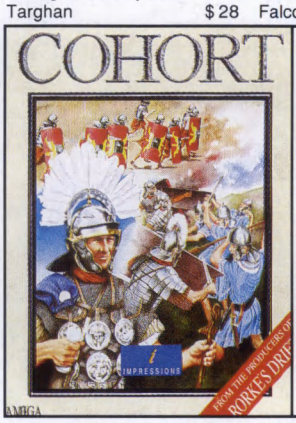
Rotox	$24
Savage	$25
Silpheed	$21
Space Ace 1 or 2	$37
Space Harrier	$28
Space Wars	$37
Speedball	$12
Speedball 2	$27
Stellar 7	$21
Stormlord	$15
Super Off Road	$15
Super Pac Man	$9
Taking of Beverly Hills	$27
Targhan	$28



'COHORT' from **IMPRESSIONS** is an unusual wargame using a miniatures style interface to cover combat between roman legions & their enemies. Features animated combat & movement, 7 unit types, infantry, cavalry, & archers, user definable army composition, 4 different maps, scenario builder, stop & give orders real time combat, 256 color VGA, & sound board support. **$34**

Teenage Mtnt Nnja Trtl	$24
Tetris	$22
Terminator	$34
Thexder 1 or 2	$21
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IBM SIMULATION

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F15 Strike Eagle 2	$29
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F19 Stealth Fighter	$39
F29 Retaliator	$34
Falcon	$34
Falcon AT	$37
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Gunship 2000	$39
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Hoverforce	$31
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Life & Death 2	$32
Lightspeed 1	$29
M1 Tank Platoon	$39
Mantis Exprmntl Fghtr	$37
Mechwarrior	$33
Megafortress	$37
Megafortress Mission 2	$24
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Mig 29 Fulcrum	$45
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Power Boat Simulator	$39
PT 109	$15
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Resolution 101	$24

IBM MAC & AMIGA GAMES FOR LESS

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S Weapons Expansion 2	$21
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Silent Service 2	$34
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Strike Commander	$45
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Tank	$33
Team Yankee	$36
Team Yankee 2	$32
Test Drive 2	$30
TD2 Callifornia Challng	$15
TD2 European Challng	$15
TD2 Muscle Cars	$15
TD2 Super Cars	$15
Test Drive 3	$32
TD3 Road & Car Disk	$19
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Thunderhawk	$32
Thunderstrike	$39
Tracon	$34
Tracon 2	$29
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Vette	$33
Wing Commander 1	$39
WC1 Mission 1 or 2	$19
Wing Commander 2	$47
WC2 Op Module 1 or 2	$27
WC2 Speach Pack	$15
Wolfpack	$15
Yeager's Air Combat	$38
Yeager's AFT 2.0	$19

AMIGA GAMES

688 Attack Sub	$34
A10 Tank Killer	$33
Action Stations	$29
Armada 2525	$32
Armor Geddon	$29
ATP	$37
Bandit Kings A China	$37
Bard's Tale 1	$18
Bard's Tale 2	$19
Bard's Tale 3	$34
Battlehawks 1942	$21
Battle Isle	$32
Battle Tank Barbarosa	$36
Battletech	$34
Birds of Prey	$32
Blue Max:Aces WW I	$34
Breach 2	$24
Breach 2 Scenario Disk	$15
Buck Rogers	$32
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Code Name:Iceman	$24
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Colonel's Bequest	$24
Command HQ	$39
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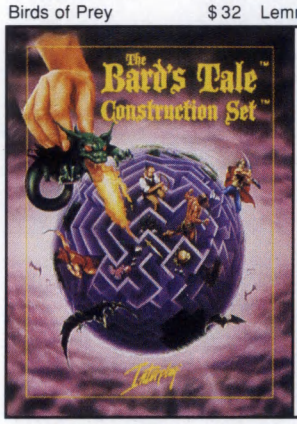
Corporation	$32
Curse of Azure Bonds	$32
Days of Thunder	$34
Death Knights of Krynn	$32

'MAGIC CANDLE 2' from **MINDCRAFT** is an in depth roleplaying game. The sequel surpasses the original. Features a great story, new spells, new magic items, new monsters, new skills, new npcs, old friends, optional auto combat, conversation recorder saves dialogue to disk, printouts, text searches, automatic mapping, split parties, mouse support, 256 color VGA, & sound board support. **$38**



'BARD'S TALE CONSTRUCTION SET' form **INTERPLAY** allows you to build your own BARD'S TALE based dungeons. Place monsters, wizards, heroes, villains, or create your own. Place pits, stairwells, teleports, anti magic areas, hidden doors, & illusionary walls. Place treasures, magic swords, armor, potions, scrolls, figurines, rings or create your own. 256 color VGA & sound support. **$34**

'SECOND CONFLICT' from **JSOFT** is a space strategy game. Control the economy, military, and civilian population. Balance population growth against military recruiting. Allocate resources to produce battleships, planetary defenses, stealth ships, transports and missiles. Multiple human and computer players, point and click **MICROSOFT WINDOWS** interface, and a scenario editor are included. **$34**

AMIGA GAMES

Dragon Force	$34
Dragon Strike	$34
Dungeon Master	$28
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Empire	$33
Eye of the Beholder	$39
Eye of the Storm	$32
F15 Strike Eagle 2	$29
F19 Stealth Fighter	$39
F29 Retaliator	$34
FA18 Interceptor	$18
Falcon	$34
Falcon Mission Disk	$18
Fire Brigade	$35
Free DC	$34
Gateway Savage Frntr	$32
Genghis Khan	$37
Gettysburg:Turn Point	$37
Gunship	$34
Halls of Montezuma	$28
Harpoon	$37
Harpoon Battle Sets	$19
Harpoon Editor	$27
Heart of China	$34
Heatwave	$28
Hound of Shadow	$28
Immortal	$34
Imperium	$26
Indy Jones Adventure	$24
Kampfgruppe	$37
King's Quest 1 - 3 Ea	$29
King's Quest 4	$34
Leisure Suit Lrry 1-5Ea	$34
Lemmings	$32
Loom	$21
Lost Admiral	$34
Lost Patrol	$34
M1 Tank Platoon	$39
Manhunter NY or SF	$29
Megafortress	$38
Midwinter	$28
Might & Magic 2	$38
Might & Magic 3	$38
Nobunaga's Ambition	$37
Nova 9	$21
Nuclear War	$34
Overrun	$39
Perfect General	$34
Planet of Lust	$28
Police Quest 1	$29
Police Quest 2	$34
Pool of Radiance	$34
Pools of Darkness	$38
Populous	$34
Populous 2	$38
Powermonger	$34
Railroad Tycoon	$34
Red Barron	$34
Red Storm Rising	$30
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Rise of the Dragon	$34
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AMIGA GAMES

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Space Quest 3 or 4	$34
Spirit of Excaliber	$29
Star Control	$34
Starflight 1	$32
Starflight 2	$32
Storm Across Europe	$39
Team Yankee	$37
Their Finest Hour	$21
Thunderhawk	$32
To the Rhine	$36
Typhoon of Steel	$39
Ultima 4 or 5	$39
UMS 2	$39
Vengeance of Excalibur	$32
Wizardry Bane Cosmic	$39
Worlds at War	$29

MACINTOSH

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Armor Alley	$32
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Carrier Command	$31
Castles	$34
Checkmate	$36
Citadel	$26
Crystal Quest	$29
Darwin's Dilemma	$32
Design Your Own Train	$32
Drgn Lair	$38
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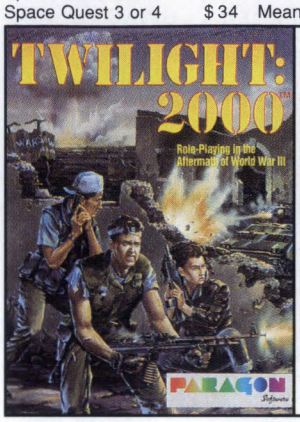
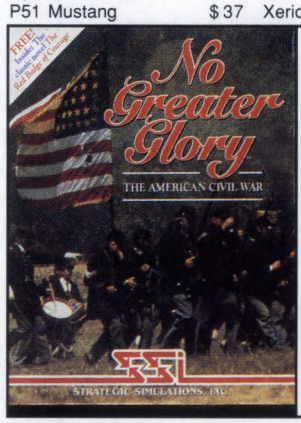
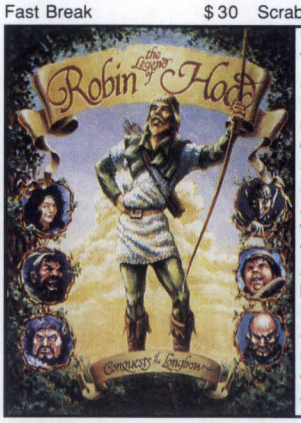
Drgn Lair Esc Singe Cst	$37
Faces/Tetris 3	$25
Falcon	$34
Fast Break	$30
Might & Magic 3	$38
Monopoly	$29
Moonbase	$24
Mutant Beach	$43
Nascar Challenge	$32
Oids	$25
Operation Combat	$29
P51 Mustang	$37
Patton Strikes Back	$35
Pirates	$39
Playmaker Football	$32
Railroad Tycoon	$39
Reach for the Stars	$29
Risk	$29
Robo Sport	$37
Scrabble Deluxe	$29
Go Master 5.0	$36
Grail Quest	$19
Harpoon	$39
Harpoon Challenge Pak	$59
Hoyle's Games 1	$21
Hoyle's Games 2	$21
Ishido	$34
Loom	$29



'TWILIGHT 2000' from **MICROPROSE** is a roleplaying game set in the aftermath of **WW3**. Test your leadership skills by commanding a squad of 20. Features individual motivations, values & moral code, 50 attributes/skills, 60 careers, overhead 3D outdoor views, detailed 3D military vehicle simulators, masses of vehicles, weapons, & explosives to kill & maim with. 256 color VGA, adlib support. **$34**



'CIVIL WAR: NO GREATER GLORY' from **SSI** is a military, economic, political simulation of the American Civil War. Determine the issues of slavery, taxes, inflation, & negro enlistment. Play either side, Abraham Lincoln & the North or Jefferson Davis & the South. Pick your cabinet members & foreign envoys. Move your armies into position & order your generals to take them to battle. **$42**



'CONQUESTS OF THE LONGBOW: ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD' is an adventure game that gives a feeling for the legend. Richard is being held for ransom by the Austrians. Your goal is to raise money to pay the ransom. You are aided by your marry band and obstructed by Prince John, the Abbot & the Sheriff. Features multiple paths to multiple endings, 256 color VGA & sound support. **$34**

MACINTOSH

Mission Starlight	$29
Nicklaus Course Disk 3	$15
Nicklaus Course Disk 4	$15
Nicklaus Course Disk 5	$15
Lemmings	$29
Lost Treasures Infocom	$59
Mean 18 Golf	$30
Might & Magic 3	$38
Monopoly	$29
Moonbase	$24
Mutant Beach	$43
Nascar Challenge	$32
Oids	$25
Operation Combat	$29
P51 Mustang	$37
Patton Strikes Back	$35
Pirates	$39
Playmaker Football	$32
Railroad Tycoon	$39
Reach for the Stars	$29
Risk	$29
Robo Sport	$37
Scrabble Deluxe	$29
Secret Silver Blades	$38
Shanghaii 2	$32
Shufflepuck Cafe	$27
Simant	$37
Simcity	$29
Simcity Graphics Set 1	$23
Simcity Graphics Set 2	$23
Simcity Terrain Editor	$15

MACINTOSH

Simearth	$41
Skyshadow	$29
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Space Ace	$37
Space Ace 2	$37
Space Quest 3	$34
Space Quest 4	$34
Spaceward Ho	$37
Spirit of Excalibur	$29
Starglider 2	$29
Strategic Conquest	$37
Stratego	$31
Swap	$29
Tank (with video)	$37
Tesserae	$32
Tetris	$24
Thexder 1	$21
Tom Landry Football	$29
Tracon 2	$29
UMS 2	$34
Vengeance of Excalibur	$32
Vette	$33
V Victory	$38
Warlords	$29
Welltris	$24
Where Europe Carmen	$30
Where Time Carmen	$30
Where USA Carmen	$30
Where World Carmen	$27
Wizardry 1	$28
Wizardry 2	$33
Wizardry Bane Csm Frg	$37
Wordtris	$25
Xerion	$25

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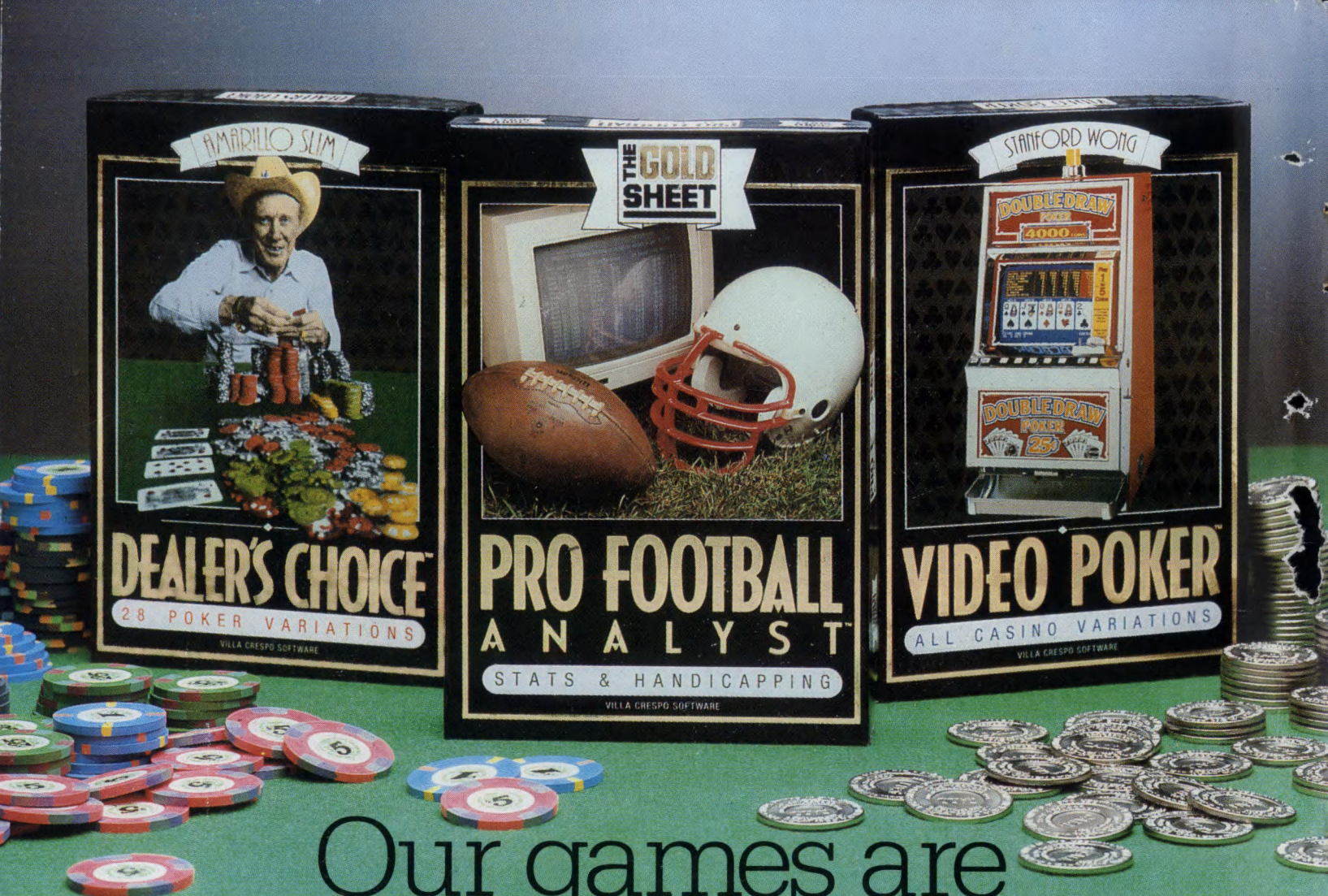

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